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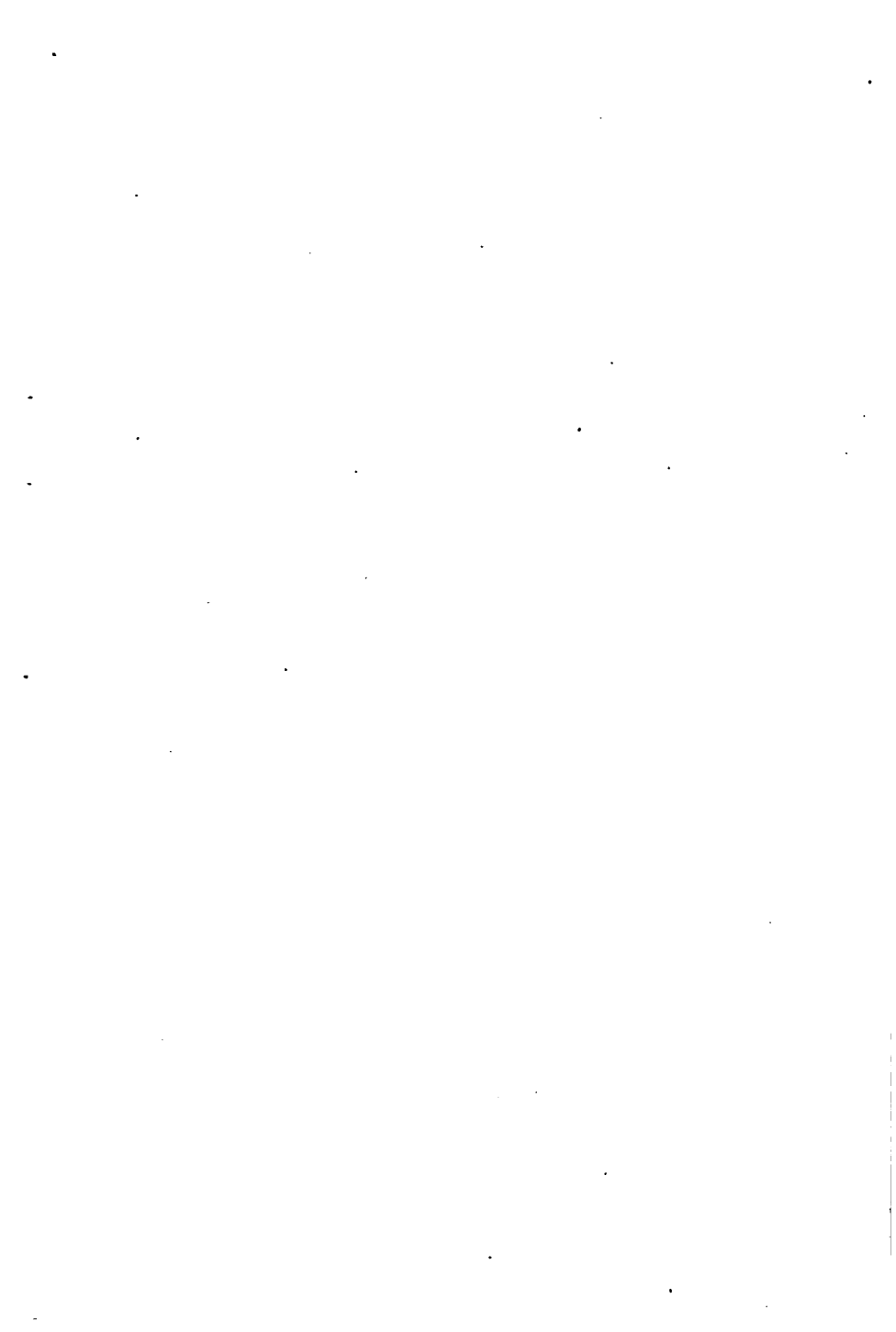
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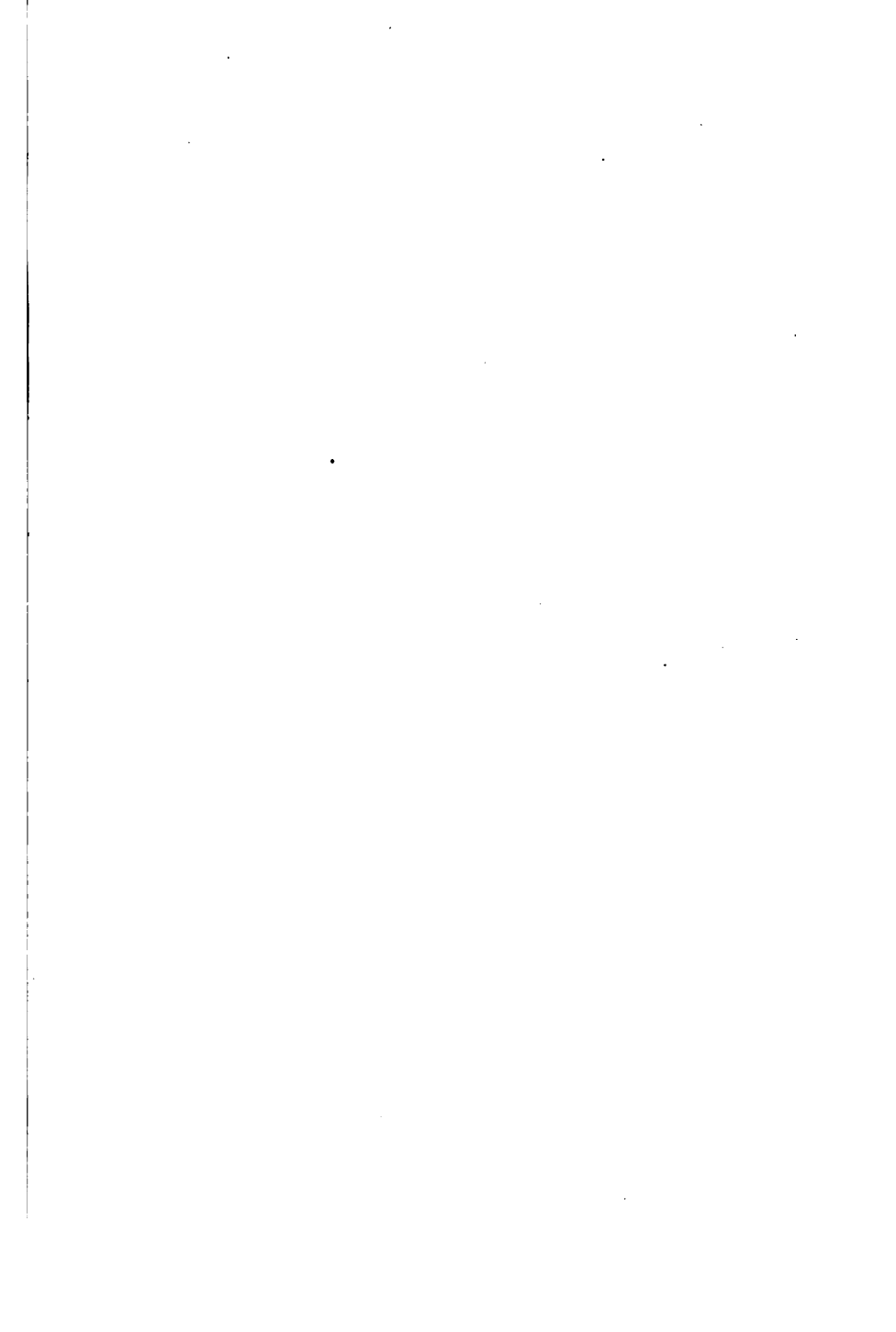
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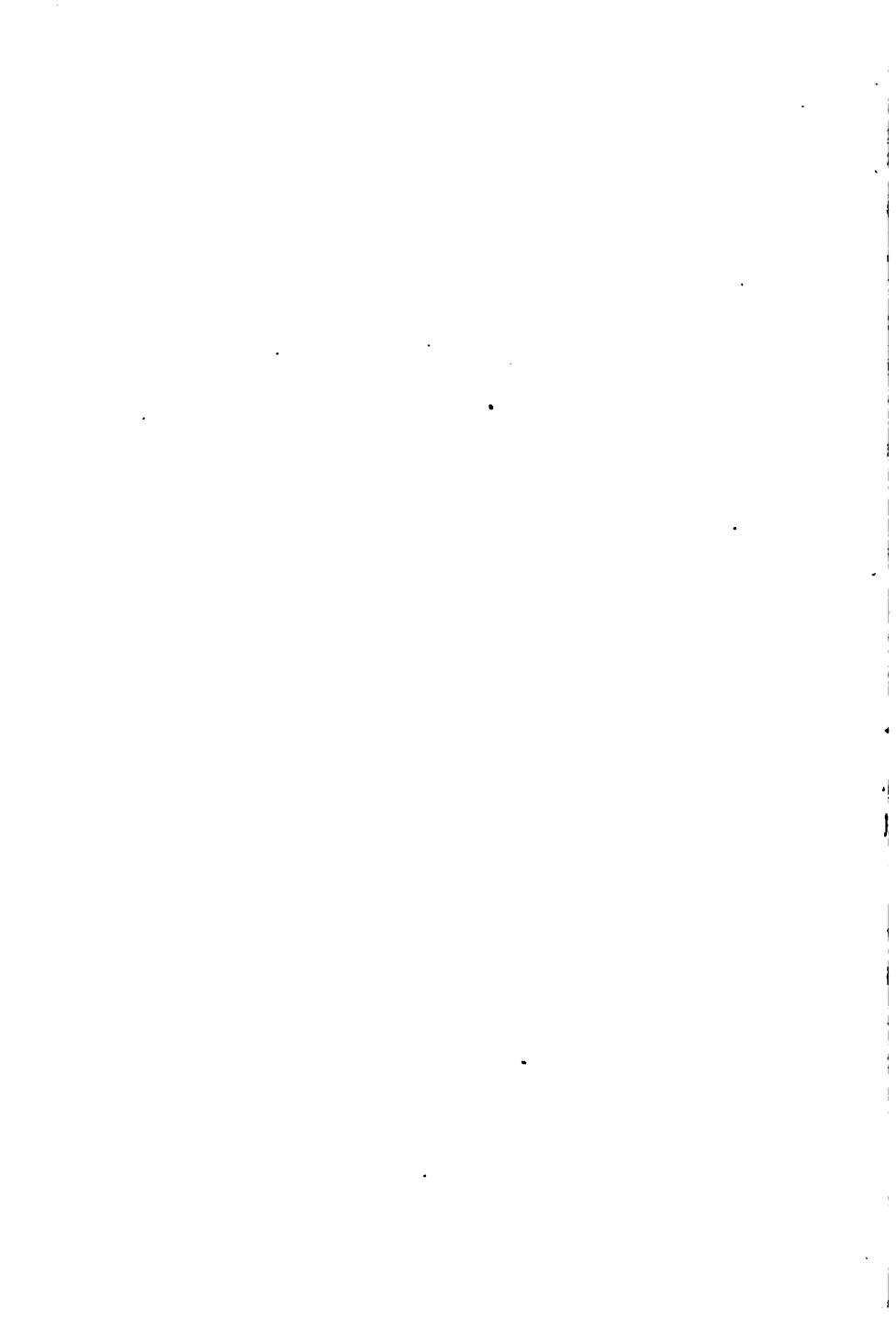
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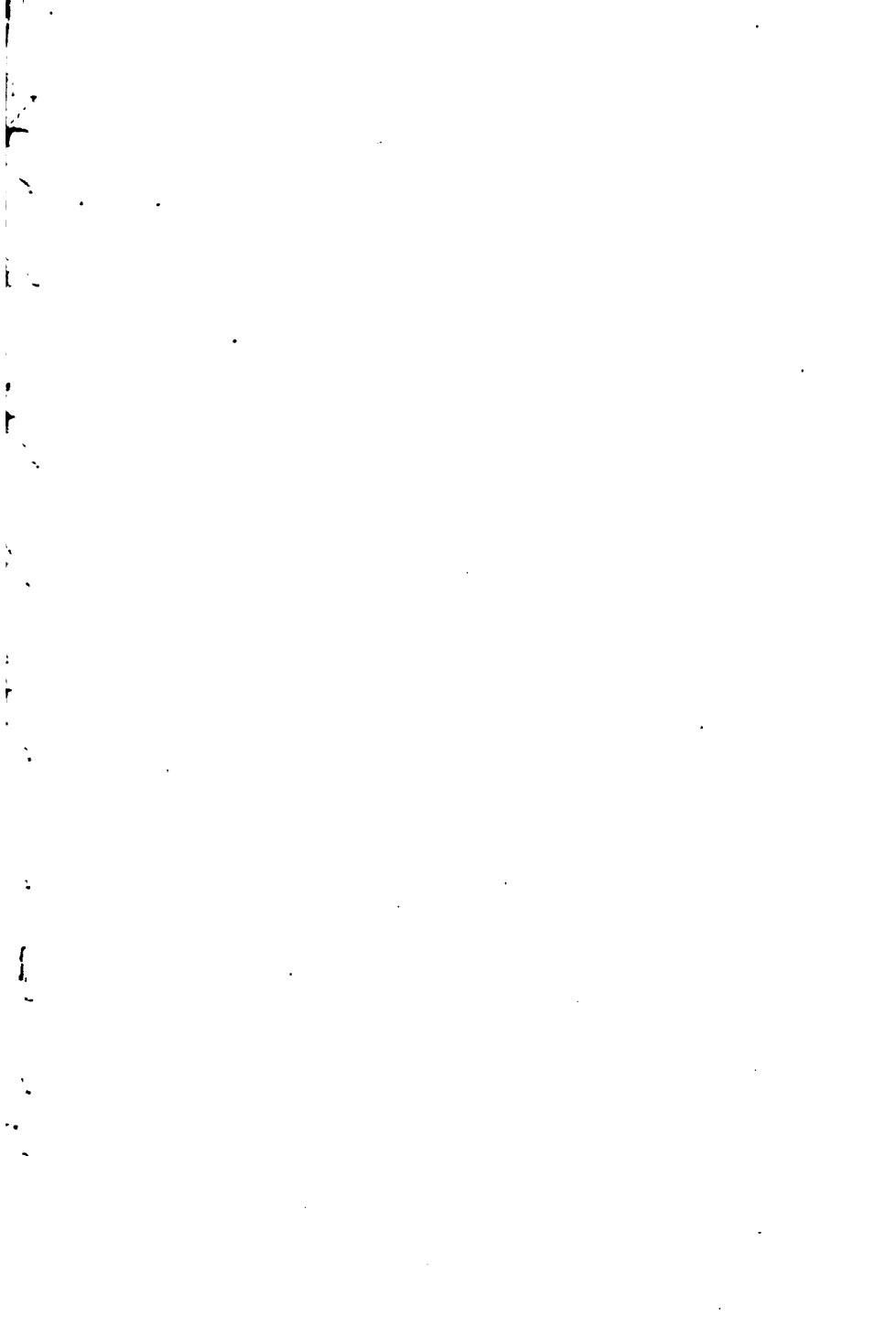


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THE
BIRCH-TREE
FAIRY
BOOK

FAVORITE FAIRY TALES

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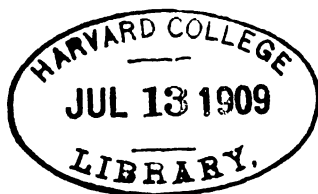
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**THE
BIRCH-TREE FAIRY BOOK**



THE FOX AND THE ROOSTER

A FOX was one day lurking about near a farm-yard to see if he could capture one of the fowls and carry it off for his dinner. Presently he saw a rooster, but the rooster also saw him, and was careful to keep at a safe distance. So the fox said, "Don't be afraid, Mr. Rooster. I want to have a little friendly chat with you."

"All right," said the rooster, "I don't object to visiting with you, if only you don't come any nearer."

"Your suspicions hurt my feelings," the fox responded. "However, never mind. I wanted to ask you how many tricks you could do."

"I can do three tricks," replied the rooster. "How many can you do yourself?"

"I can do three score and thirteen," declared the fox.

"Can you?" said the rooster; "and what is the best one of all?"

"It is one my grandfather taught me," answered the fox. "He could shut both eyes and give a great shout, and I learned to do the same thing."

"Why, that's nothing! I could do that myself," bragged the rooster.

"Do you really think you could?" asked the fox. "Try it."

So the rooster crowed as loud as he could, and then made himself big and flapped his wings as though he had done a great thing; but he only shut one eye, for he wanted to watch the fox with the other.

"Very pretty," said Reynard; "almost as pretty as when the parson preaches in church. However, you didn't shut both eyes. I hardly thought you could do the trick as well as my grandfather did."

"But I can!" declared the rooster, and forgetting the need of caution he closed both eyes and crowed once more.

That gave the fox the chance he wanted, and he leaped forward, and by the time the rooster had his eyes open, the fox had gripped him by the neck and started to run off with him.

But the rooster's favorite wife saw what had

happened, and she gave chase, crying out, "Let go that rooster! He's mine!"



"Mr. Fox," said the rooster, "my wife can go very swift, and if you don't want her to catch up with us and peck you, I advise you

to call back, 'This rooster is not yours. He is mine.' "

The fox found it slow work lugging along the heavy rooster, and he did not wish to be pecked. He thought the plan the rooster suggested was a very good one, and he opened his mouth to shout back at the hen that the rooster was his.

But by so doing he let go his grip on the captive's neck, and no sooner did the rooster find himself at liberty than he flew up into a tree. Then he shut both eyes and gave a loud crow; and that is all there is to this story.

TOM THUMB

IN the days of good King Arthur there lived in England a poor ploughman who used to sit in the chimney corner all the evening and poke the fire while his wife sat at her spinning wheel; and he used to say, "How dull it is without any children about us! Our house is so quiet, and other people's houses are noisy and merry!"

"Yes," his wife would answer, sighing, "and if we only had a child, even if he were no bigger than my thumb, how happy we would be!"

"You are quite right, my dear wife," he would respond. "Our happiness would be complete, even though the child were no larger than you say."

There was at this period a celebrated magician named Merlin at the court of King Arthur, and one time when he was on his travels he stopped over night at the home of the poor ploughman. He did not tell who he was, and the ploughman and his wife did not suspect him to be anybody but

an ordinary traveller. In the evening he listened with interest to their conversation and was much



amused when he heard them wish for a child, though no bigger than one's thumb. "They shall have what they wish," he said to himself, and then he drew forth a small box from his pocket and took a pinch of powder out of it, which he threw into the fire.

Immediately there was a flash of bright light and a puff of smoke that went up the chimney, but which left behind a strange, sweet odor, and Merlin said,

"Oh, fairies, quickly to this cottage come,
And bring a child no bigger than my thumb."

He spoke in so low a tone that the ploughman and his wife did not catch the words, and they stared at him, very much puzzled.

The next morning Merlin went his way, and they saw him no more; but before another year was past the ploughman's wife had a son who was perfect in all his limbs and yet no bigger than a man's thumb. Then the parents said, "He is just what we asked for, and we will love him very much," and they called him Tom Thumb.

They gave him plenty to eat and drink, but he never grew any bigger. However, he was healthy and strong and had quick wits and was so clever that he got along for the most part very well, in spite of his small size. He had no serious mishaps until one day he climbed to the top of one of the fireplace andirons to look in a pot that was set on the fire. He wanted to find out what was being cooked for dinner. But as he leaned over on tiptoe to look, the steam from the pot suddenly lifted him from where he stood and carried him up the black chimney. He soon came out at the top, and the wind wafted him off across the fields. At last he floated down to the ground. There was a house in sight, and Tom said to himself, "I am a great way from home, and I will not try to return at

present. I think I had better go to this house and ask for work."

This he did, and work was given to him, but the food his mistress furnished was very poor.



After a while he complained to her about it, and she was so angry that she declared she would punish him. He started to run. "Stop, you little grasshopper!" cried she.

But Tom did not stop. He climbed up a table leg and popped under a teacup. She saw where

he had gone and lifted the cup, but before she could lay hands on him he slipped through a crack in the table into a drawer. The woman's name was Ann Brown, and Tom called out to her :

“ Hey, hey ! there, Mistress Ann,
Now catch me if you can ! ”

However, she did catch him at last and turned him out of the house. Then he set off for home, and very glad he was when he got there.

Some time afterward he was in the kitchen having a little fun by himself, throwing his cap about, when it went into a bowl of sausage meat his mother had just made ready. He climbed into the bowl after it; but found, after securing his cap, that he could not get out. His mother had gone to a neighbor's on an errand, and while he was waiting for her he sat down and fell asleep. In a little while she came back and resumed her work. She did not see Tom, and before he knew what was going on she had stuffed him into a sausage. He did not like that at all, but there was no help for it. The sausage was hung up on a peg until it was needed for eating. When it was taken down and Tom's mother began cutting it into slices he called out,

“ Don't cut too deep, don't cut too deep !
Tom Thumb is hidden in the meat.”

His mother recognized his voice and carefully opened the sausage, and there he was, sure enough!

Several months later he was playing about on the kitchen table when his mother was making a batter pudding. While her back was turned he got up on the edge of the pudding dish, and losing his footing, fell into the batter, head first. He went in all over, and his mother did not know what had become of him. Pretty soon she put the pudding in a bag and then put the bag into a kettle of hot water hung over the fire. As soon as Tom began to feel the heat he kicked so that the pudding danced about in the kettle like mad.

His mother noticed the strange behavior of the pudding and was nearly frightened out of her senses. She thought it was bewitched, and she took the kettle and poured pudding and all out into the yard.

Soon afterward a tinker happened to be passing that way, and he saw the pudding and picked it up. He imagined he would have the pleasure of eating the best dinner he had enjoyed in a long time, but as he was getting over a stile he sneezed, and Tom, who had hitherto remained silent, cried out, "Hello, Pickins!"

The tinker was so terrified to hear a voice from the pudding that he threw it down and scampered away as fast as he could go. The pudding was broken in pieces by the fall, and Tom got free



from it and went home to his mother, who was feeling very much alarmed over his disappearance.

Considerable of the pudding still stuck to him, and she gave him a thorough washing in a teacup and then kissed him and put him to bed.

On another day Tom Thumb's father made ready to go to the forest to cut wood. "I shall be gone until evening," said he to his wife, "and I wish there was some one to bring the cart to me this afternoon."

"I can bring the cart to you, father," said Tom.

His father laughed and said, "How would you manage to drive? You are much too little to hold the reins."

"That has nothing to do with it," replied Tom. "Mother can put me in one of the horse's ears and I will tell the horse where to go."

"Well," said his father, after talking the matter over with his wife, "we will try your plan," and he tramped off into the forest.

When it was time for Tom to start, his mother hitched the horse to the cart, set Tom in one of the horse's ears, and then went on with her spinning. Tom drove off crying, "Gee-up, gee-wo!"

The horse went on quite as if his master were driving him, and drew the wagon along the road

into the woods. While on the way, it chanced that two strange men met the cart, and they heard Tom calling to the horse.

"How is this?" said one of them. "There goes a cart, and the driver is calling to the horse, and yet he is nowhere to be seen."

"It is very queer," responded the other, "and I think we had better follow the cart and see where its journey will end."

So they followed the cart into the woods until it came to the place where Tom's father was at work. Then they heard Tom cry out, "Look, father, here I am with the cart. Now take me down!"

The father lifted his little son out of the horse's ear and put him down on a stump, where he sat quite happy and content. As for the two strangers, they were struck dumb with wonder at sight of a human being so very small. Finally one of them whispered to the other, "That little chap would make our fortune if we were to show him in the town for money. We must manage to carry him away with us."

So while the father was busy loading the cart, one of the strangers slipped up behind Tom, threw his handkerchief over him, and thrust him into his pocket. Then the two men hurried off. At length,

when they had gone so far they thought they were safe from pursuit, they took Tom out of the handkerchief and looked at him. They soon prepared to go on, and were wrapping Tom in the handkerchief again, but he begged them not to do so. "Please, sir," said he, speaking to the man who held him, "put me on the brim of your hat. It will make a good gallery for me. Then I can walk about and view the country while you are proceeding on your journey."

They granted his wish, and travelled on until it grew dusk. Then they stopped to rest, and they took Tom off the hat-brim and set him on the ground. Not far away he spied a mouse-hole, and he made a sudden run and jumped into it. "Good evening, my masters," cried he, looking out of the hole toward the men; "you can go home without me now."

They hurried toward him and he crawled down out of sight. With their sticks they felt about in the mouse-hole, but in vain. Tom crept farther and farther in, and as night was coming on, the men had to make the best of their way home empty-handed.

By and by Tom crept up to the mouth of the hole. It was dark and everything was quiet, but

after a time he heard the footsteps of two men approaching on the road, and the men were talking. However, he had no fear, for their voices were not the voices of the men who had stolen him. Just as the men came opposite him, one said to the other, "How can we contrive to get hold of the rich parson's gold and silver?"

"I can tell you," cried Tom.

The thieves were frightened and stopped to listen. "I thought I heard somebody speak," said one of them."

"It was me," said Tom. "Take me with you and I will show you how to get that money."

"Where are you, then?" asked they.

"Look about on the ground and notice where my voice comes from," answered he.

At last they found him and lifted him up. "You little elf," said they, "how can you help us?"

"Why, I can easily creep between the iron bars of the parson's treasure-room," said he, "and hand out to you whatever you would like to have."

"Very well," said they, "we will try what you can do."

So when they came to the parsonage Tom Thumb crept into the room where the money was kept, and

cried out with all his might, "Will you have all that is here?"

The thieves were terrified with the noise he made, and said, "Do speak more softly, lest some one should be awakened."

But Tom pretended he did not hear them, and he cried out again, "What would you like? Will you have all that is here?"

The cook, who was sleeping in a room hard by, heard him and raised herself in bed on her elbow and listened. The thieves, however, in their fear of being discovered, had run out of the yard into the road, and everything was so quiet that the cook lay down to sleep again. The robbers waited a few minutes in the road and then took courage and concluded that their plan had not yet been spoiled and that the little fellow's shouting was simply an attempt to play a joke on them. So they came softly back to the window and whispered to Tom to be serious and begin passing the money to them.

But he called once more as loud as he could, "Oh, yes, I will give it all to you! Only put out your hands!"

The cook heard his words distinctly this time and jumped out of bed and came hurrying in at

the door, while the robbers got away as fast as they could. In the darkness the cook could not see whether anything was amiss or not, and she went back for a light. Before she appeared again, Tom climbed out of the window, and though she looked in every nook and corner, she found not the least sign of intruders. So she blew out her light and went to bed, thinking she had been dreaming.

Tom took himself off to the barn and sought out a snug place in the hay, where he went to sleep, intending as soon as it was day to go home to his father and mother. But the maid whose business it was to take care of the cows got up at dawn to feed them, and she came to the barn and picked Tom up with an armful of hay which she put in one of the mangers.

Tom was asleep, and he never awoke until he was in the mouth of a cow that had taken him up with some hay. "Oh dear!" cried he, "how is it that I have got into a mill?"

But he soon found that instead of a mill it was a cow's mouth. He was careful not to get between the creature's teeth, and pretty soon the cow swallowed him, and he went down into the cow's stomach. "The windows were forgotten when this little room was built," said he. "The

sunshine cannot get in here and I wish I had a candle."

His quarters were in every way unpleasant to him, and the worst of his troubles was that more hay was



constantly coming in and the space was being filled up. Finally he cried out as loud as he could, "No more hay for me! No more hay for me!"

The maid was then milking the cow, and when she heard a voice but could see no one, she was

so frightened that she fell off her stool and over-set the milk-pail. As soon as she could get up she ran to the house in great haste crying, "Oh, master dear, the cow talks!"

"You must be crazy," answered her master, and he went himself to the barn to see what was the matter.

But he had scarcely set his foot inside the door when Tom Thumb cried out again, "No more hay for me! No more hay for me!"

Then the parson himself was frightened. He thought an evil spirit must have entered into the cow, and he ordered her killed. This was done, and the parts that were good for meat were saved, while the stomach and some other portions were thrown out on a refuse heap in the barnyard.

Tom worked as hard as he could to make a hole through the thick wall of his prison, and at last he succeeded in getting his head out. "I shall soon be free now," said he; but night had come again, and before Tom could escape, a hungry wolf stole into the barnyard. The wolf went straight to the cow's stomach and began eating it, and with one of his mouthfuls he gulped Tom down.

Tom did not lose courage, for he thought to himself, "Perhaps this wolf will listen to reason, and I can contrive to make him of some service to me."

So he cried out from inside the savage creature, "My dear wolf, I can tell you where to get a splendid meal — much better than you are eating here."

"Where is it to be had?" asked the wolf.

Tom described to him his father's house, and said, "You can get into the storeroom by creeping through the drain, and there you will find cakes, and bacon, and beef, as much as you can eat."

The wolf did not need to be told twice. He ran all the way to the house Tom had told him about, squeezed himself through the drain, and feasted on the good things in the storeroom, to his heart's content. He did not stop until it began to grow light with the approach of day. Then the wolf wanted to go to the forest where he lived, but he had so stuffed himself that he was too big to creep out the same way he had come in. This was what Tom had reckoned on, and he began to make a terrible din inside the wolf, crying and calling as loud as he could.

"Do be quiet!" said the wolf. "You will wake the folks up."

"Look here!" replied the little man, "you are very well satisfied with the food I have shown you, and now that you have had your frolic, I have a mind to do something for my own enjoyment."

Then he resumed his racket, and at last his father and mother were awakened. They ran to the storeroom door and peeped through a chink, and when they saw the wolf they went to get weapons.



The man armed himself with an axe, and the woman secured a scythe. "Stay behind," said the man, as they entered the room. "I will give him the first blow, and if that does not finish him, you strike with your scythe."

Tom Thumb heard his father's voice, and cried, "Dear father, I am here in the wolf's inside."

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed the father, joyfully, "we have found our dear child."

So after telling his wife not to use her scythe lest Tom should be hurt with it, he drew near to the wolf and struck it such a blow on the head with his axe that it fell down dead, and then with a knife he soon released the little fellow inside.

"Oh, how worried we have been about you!" said the father.

"We had no idea what had become of you," added his mother.

"Well," said Tom, "it seems very pleasant to breathe fresh air again. I have seen a good deal of the world since I have been gone."

"And where have you been all this time?" they asked.

"Oh," replied Tom, "I have been in a mouse-hole, and in a cow's stomach, and in the inside of a wolf; and now I think I will stay at home."

"We hope you will," cried the parents, as they kissed and hugged their little son.

Then they gave him something to eat and drink, and his mother went to work to make him a new suit of clothes.

Some time passed before Tom had another adventure, but finally one day, when he was in a field where his father was ploughing, a crow picked him up and flew with him to the top of a giant's castle that was on the borders of the sea, and there left him. Tom was very much distressed and did not know what to do. While he was thinking about the situation, old Grumbo, the giant, came up to walk on the parapet, and seeing Tom he took him up and was about to swallow him like a pill.

But the giant had no sooner got Tom in his mouth than he began to repent of his intention; for the little man kicked and jumped about so much that the giant leaned over the parapet and spat him out into the sea, and the moment Tom splashed into the water a large fish swallowed him. But he was so small that the fish was still hungry, and it swam along until it chanced to see a baited hook, and the bait looked so tempting that the fish bit at it and was caught. The fisherman who

captured the fish carried it to market, where it was purchased for the table of King Arthur.

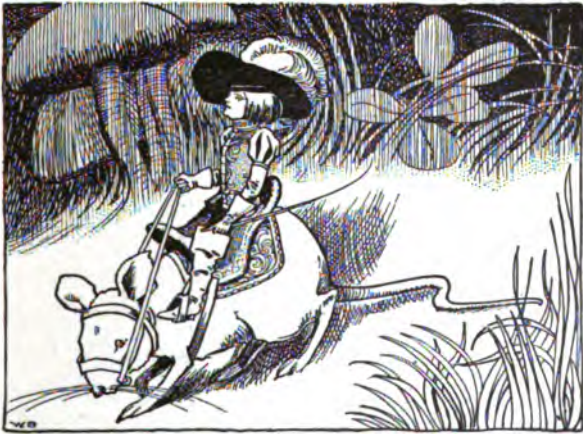
When the servants opened the fish in order to prepare it for cooking, they were greatly astonished to find Tom inside. They had never before seen or heard of a human being so small, and they carried Tom to the king, who took the little fellow into his service and sent word to his father and mother that he was safe at the royal castle.

A few weeks later the king had Tom accompany him to his treasury where he kept all his money, and told him he could have as much as he could carry home to his parents. So Tom picked out a silver three-penny piece, and the king had a purse made for it. Then Tom with some difficulty lifted the burden onto his back and set forward on his journey. He had to rest himself more than a hundred times by the way, but in two days and two nights he reached his father's house in safety, though almost tired to death with carrying that huge silver piece.

He rested for several days and then returned to court, where he soon was a great favorite; for by his tricks and gambols he not only amused the king and queen, but all the knights of the Round Table.

The king often took Tom with him when he rode out on horseback, and if there was a shower Tom would creep into his majesty's waistcoat pocket and sleep till the rain was over.

So pleased was the king with Tom that he at length knighted him, and the little man went under the name of Sir Thomas Thumb. Tom was given a tame mouse, which was fitted with a saddle and



bridle and served him for a horse. One day, as he was riding on his mouse past a farmhouse, a cat sprang suddenly forth from some lurking-place and seized both rider and steed and ran up a tree with them. Then Tom boldly drew his sword, which had been made for him out of a needle,

and assailed the cat so fiercely that she was glad to release her prey and get beyond the reach of Tom's sword-thrusts.

The king and his knights were more fond than ever of Tom after this exploit, but the queen became jealous on account of the honor paid to Sir Thomas and presently reported to the king that he had been saucy to her.

King Arthur sent for Tom in great haste, but the little fellow was fully aware of the dangers of royal anger, and he crept into an empty snail shell and lay there hiding for a long time until he was almost starved. When he at last ventured to look out he saw the mouse he used for a horse running about looking for him. So he put on its saddle and bridle, jumped on its back, and returned to the court. Everyone was glad to see him except the queen, who insisted that he must be punished. The king therefore ordered that he should be kept shut up, but after a week or two pardoned him and restored him to his favor.

He had not been long at liberty when a large spider attacked him as he was one day walking in the garden, and though he fought the creature with his sword most valiantly, the spider at last overcame and killed him.

Then the king and his whole court were so sorry at the loss of their little favorite that they went into mourning, and over his grave they raised a fine white marble monument on which was engraved these lines:

“Here lies Tom Thumb, King Arthur’s knight,
Who died by a spider’s cruel bite.
Wipe, wipe your eyes, and shake your head,
And cry, ‘Alas! Tom Thumb is dead!’”



THE PRINCESS AND THE BEAN

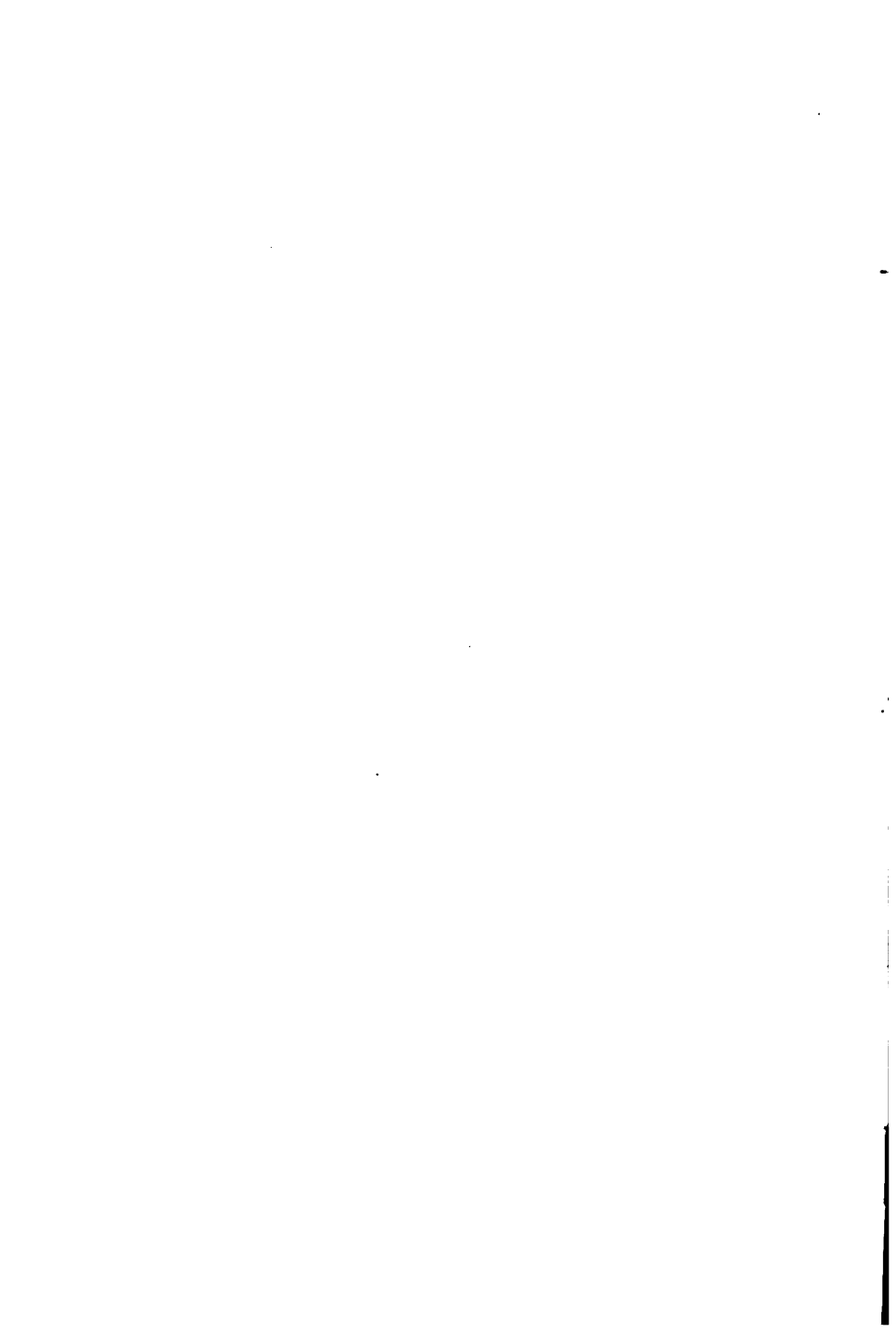
THERE was once a prince who wished to marry a princess, but she must be a real princess and not a pretended one. So he travelled all over the whole world to find such a lady. Princesses there were plenty, but he hesitated to select a wife from among them. There was always something wrong. It was now one thing, now another, that seemed not quite right, and he was unable to decide whether the ladies were real princesses or not. At last he returned to his palace greatly cast down, because he wished so much to have a real princess for his wife.

One night a fearful tempest arose. The thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents. The storm was still raging when a knocking was heard at the palace door, and the old king, the father of the prince, went himself to see who was there.

Outside the door stood a princess, and what a



The king himself went to the door



state she was in! The rain was streaming down from her hair and clothes, and her shoes were torn so that the water was running in at the toes and out at the heels, and yet she said she was a real princess.

The old queen mother had followed behind the king, and she heard what the princess said. "Ah! we shall see about that," thought she.

However, she said not a word of what she was going to do, but went quietly into the bedroom where the princess would spend the night, took all the things off the bed, and placed a small bean on the bedstead. She then laid twenty mattresses one above the other over the bean and put twenty feather-beds over the mattresses.

To this bed the princess was presently conducted, and the next morning she was asked how she had slept. "Oh, very badly indeed!" she replied. "I have scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. Heaven knows what there may have been in my bed! But I lay on something hard, so that I am black and blue all over my body. It is quite dreadful."

The queen then told how the bed had been prepared, and it was plain to everybody that the lady was a real princess, else she would not have felt the bean through the twenty mattresses and twenty

feather-beds. None but a real princess could have such a delicate sense of feeling. As the prince was now convinced that he had found a real princess, he made her his wife ; and the bean was placed in the royal museum, where it may still be seen if no one has taken it away.

Was not this princess a lady of wonderful delicacy ?

THE CAT AND THE MOUSE

ONCE there was an old cat lying on the hearth by the fire purring and purring.

By and by along came a little mouse, and the old cat bit its tail off.

Then the little mouse said, "Pray, cat, give me my great long *tail* again."

And the old cat said, "Well, go first to the cow and get me some milk."

So the little mouse hopped and then he ran and quickly he came to a good old cow.

Then the mouse said, "Pray, cow, give me milk, that I may give cat milk, that cat may give me my great long *tail* again."

And the old cow said, "Well, go first to the barn and get me some hay."

So the little mouse hopped and then he ran and quickly he came to a good old barn.

Then the mouse said, "Pray, barn, give me hay, that cow may give me milk, that cat may give me my great long *tail* again."

But the barn was locked and it said, "Well, go first to the locksmith and get me a key."

So the little mouse hopped and then he ran and quickly he came to a good old locksmith.

Then the mouse said, "Pray, smith, give me key, that barn may give me hay, that cow may give me milk, that cat may give me my great long *tail* again."

But the locksmith had no key that would fit, and he could not make a key until he had some coal for his fire, and he said, "Well, go first to the coaler and get me some coal."

So the little mouse hopped and then he ran and quickly he came to a good old coaler.

Then the mouse said, "Pray, coaler, give me coal, that locksmith may give me key, that barn may give me hay, that cow may give me milk, that cat may give me my great long *tail* again."

And the coaler said, "Well, go first to the baker and get me some bread."

So the little mouse hopped and then he ran and quickly he came to a good old baker.

Then the mouse said, "Pray, baker, give me bread, that coaler may give me coal, that locksmith may give me key, that barn may give me hay, that cow may give me milk, that cat may give me my great long *tail* again."

“Oh yes,” says the baker, “I’ll give you some bread,
But don’t eat my meal or I’ll cut off your head.”

Then the baker gave the mouse bread, and the mouse gave it to the coaler, and the coaler gave the mouse coal, and the mouse gave it to the locksmith, and the locksmith gave the mouse a key, and the mouse gave it to the barn, and the barn gave the mouse hay, and the mouse gave it to the cow, and the cow gave the mouse milk, and the mouse gave it to the cat, and the cat gave the mouse his great long *tail* again.

So the little mouse hopped, and away it ran,
And cried out to Pussy, “Catch me if you can.”



ROBERT SCOTT AND THE GNOMES

ROBERT SCOTT was a mason and went from town to town working at his trade.

When he had done such jobs as he could find in one place he travelled on to the next. Once as he was journeying thus with two companions whom he had chanced to find going in the same direction, noon came and the three sat down in a wood a little aside from the road to rest themselves and eat some food they had brought along.

Hardly were they seated when they heard the hissing of a snake. They looked in the direction of the sound and saw the snake coming straight toward them. It was perfectly white in color and fully four feet long. Robert Scott's companions were so terrified they took to their heels, but he stood his ground. The snake lifted its head, opened its mouth, and ran out its forked tongue.

"Aha!" said Robert, "you would bite me and poison me with your venom, would you? Well,



The encounter with the white snake



we'll see about that"; and he gave it a heavy blow with his cane that laid it dead at his feet.

He now called to his comrades and they came and examined the curious snake. Then they ate their lunch, lay down and slept for a time, and afterward went on. The weather had become threatening, and when they arrived at the next public house they concluded to stop for the night.

In the course of the evening's conversation mention was made of Robert Scott's exploit in killing the snake. The landlady of the house, who was something of a witch, happened to hear what was said, and her curiosity appeared to be a good deal excited. "I would willingly give a half crown to see that white snake," said she.

"Well," said Robert, "half crowns are none too plenty with me, and I will go after the snake and bring it to you."

So off he started and soon returned with the snake and received the half crown. He put the snake down on the kitchen hearth, and the landlady looked at it and muttered to herself, "Yes, the snake is quite dead."

Then she went about her work.

Bedtime came, and Robert's two companions went upstairs to a chamber. As for him, he was

not feeling well, and he begged leave to sleep by the kitchen fire. The landlady tried to dissuade him from the idea, but finally gave him an old blanket, and he lay down by the fireside. There he slept soundly until midnight, when he was aroused by a noise close at hand. He opened his eyes and saw the landlady patting the white snake and mumbling some words he could not catch. Then, to his surprise, life returned to the snake and it spoke to the woman, saying, "You have done me a great service. How can I reward you?"

"Bring me the magic holly berries I have long wanted," replied the woman.

"Very well," said the snake.

Then the woman opened the door and the snake glided out. A half hour later Robert Scott heard a rustling at the threshold. The snake had returned, and when the landlady went to the door Robert saw that the creature had a sprig of holly berries in its mouth. This the woman took, and the snake turned about and disappeared in the darkness.

The landlady carried the berries to the fire and put them in a little pot of water and set the pot over some coals. They were soon simmering and filled the apartment with a most delicate and delightful odor. Presently the landlady set the pot out at

the edge of the hearth to cool. "That is the most wonderful drink in the world," said she. "It will soon be ready."

She stood for several minutes waiting. Then she stepped into the next room.

"What sort of virtue is there in the stuff, I wonder?" thought Robert Scott. "Certainly I never have smelled anything so delicious in all my life. I believe I will take a taste. A few drops less will not matter to her."

He rose on his elbow, reached for the pot, drank a hasty mouthful, and set the pot back. "Whatever that is," said he to himself, "it beats all that I have ever tasted before," and he sank back to his former position.

The landlady soon returned, took up the pot with the magic berries in it, and began to drink; but she removed the dish from her mouth with an exclamation of anger. "The goodness has gone from this magic potion!" cried she. "Somebody has drank before me!"

She looked at Robert Scott suspiciously and then grabbed his shoulder and shook him with all her might. "You villain!" she shouted, "you have been drinking my magic liquor!"

"I beg your pardon," he responded, getting to

his feet and releasing himself from her fury. "I only took a few drops. I meant no harm."

"Out of the house with you!" she shrieked, reaching for her broomstick, and he slipped through the door without further delay.

"Foolish man!" said he to himself as he stumbled along the gloomy roadway. "Here I am turned out into the chilly night all for that one sweet mouthful. I wish" —

But he was interrupted by the sudden appearance in front of him of a strange little man, who seemed to have popped up out of the ground. Though short, the stranger was very powerfully built. In one hand he carried a heavy hammer, in the other an iron bar. "What do you wish?" asked the dwarf. "Tell me and your wish shall be granted."

"Who are you?" inquired Robert Scott.

"I am one of the earth gnomes," was the reply. "When you drank that potion of magic holly, one thousand of us became your servants. Henceforth you must keep us busy. Whatever you wish done we will do."

"No doubt there is some joke in this," said Robert, "and I don't believe a word of what you tell me. However, I don't mind saying that the

thing I particularly wish for just now is a comfortable house where I can spend the rest of the night."

Immediately the gnome gave the earth a sharp rap with his hammer, and there swarmed up from the ground hundreds of other gnomes, and to Robert Scott's great fright and consternation they whisked him away out of the village. He made up his mind that his last hour had come, but they soon stopped, and then his ears were stunned with the sound of innumerable axes and hammers and saws and other tools close about him. In five minutes or so there stood a handsome house furnished and lighted, and the gnome he had first seen came and said, "Your orders have been obeyed. Here is the house for which you wished, and you can take possession at once. What shall we do next?"

"Oh, rest a while, go on a vacation. I give you a holiday. You must be tired," said Robert.

"We need no rest," replied the gnome. "What we want is work, and you must find it for us."

The spot where they stood was on high ground overlooking a broad bay that could just be seen in the dim night reaching in from the sea.

"Well," said Robert, "if you must have work, there is that bay. Supposing you build a bridge

across it. When the bridge is done, if I am still living at that time, come to me for more work."

The gnomes hastened away, and Robert thought he was rid of them forever, and laughed heartily to think of the impossible task he had set them. He now took a look through his new home and went to bed.

When he rose the next morning and glanced out of his window toward the bay he saw a great stone bridge stretching across the water nearly to the other shore. He was speechless with astonishment for some minutes. Then he exclaimed, "Why, this won't do! Such a bridge will shut up the bay to all the shipping and cause no end of trouble."

He opened the window in haste, and leaning out shouted, "Hold on there!"

His voice could not have been heard far by ordinary ears, but he had scarcely spoken when the old gnome with the iron bar and hammer stood before him. "I am your servant, to do whatever you wish," said the gnome.

"I did n't know you fellows were such workers," Robert explained, "and I did n't consider this bridge business as carefully as I should have done. Don't you see? It's going to spoil the bay. I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to pull the bridge to pieces."

"All right," responded the gnome, "we will set about the task immediately."

He was turning to leave when Robert called to him and said, "Just wait a minute. This is a very nice house you have built, but if you can do so, I wish you would fix me up with a servant or two and something to eat."

"Your wants shall be attended to," answered the dwarf, making a low bow, and then he was gone.

Robert went into the house, and there he found two servants and plenty of food; and ever afterward he had all that he wanted with only the trouble of asking for it. But there was one drawback to his happiness. He had to keep the thousand gnomes busy. They demolished the bridge in less than half a day and at once flocked to Robert Scott clamorous for more work. He devised task after task until he was at his wits' end for anything more with which to busy his gnome workmen. They were always pestering him. No matter whether it was day or night, the moment they finished one job they came to him and could not be got rid of till he had given them another.

Robert thought he could have endured them if they had desisted from disturbing him after he had gone to bed. However, they were as likely to



come banging and clattering about the house at midnight as any other time. "Come out here, Robert Scott! Come out here, Robert Scott!" they would shout. "Come out here and give us more work to do."

"Rest!" said he to them in despair on one such occasion. "For goodness' sake, do rest! Go and sit

down somewhere, and don't come back for a year!"

But they would not agree to any such proposal, and finally he shook his fist at them angrily and shouted, "Well, then, go and make me a rope from sea foam and sand that will reach from here to the moon!"

The company of gnomes scurried away toward the sea, and Robert Scott was never troubled by them afterward. When there was anything he wanted they would still come obedient to his wish, but after they had done the service for which he asked, they returned to their rope-making, and he no longer had to think up work for them. He sometimes saw on the beach what looked like attempts at the rope he had ordered, but the gnomes evidently never succeeded in finishing it.

THE FISHER BOY

LONG, long ago there lived by the sea a young fisherman named Urashi. He was a kindly lad and he was clever about his fishing. He minded neither wind nor weather, and did not know what it was to be afraid. No one else in the village dared venture so far out to sea as he, and the neighbors often shook their heads and said to his parents, "If your son keeps on being so reckless, he will some day try his luck once too often, and the waves will swallow him up."

His parents told him what was said, but the village talk made no difference with him.

One bright, beautiful morning when he had gone out in his boat as usual, he baited his hook, dropped his line into the water, and sat down to wait for a bite. In a little while he caught something—and what do you think it was? It was a great tortoise. Urashi was delighted with his prize, but no sooner had he drawn it into the boat than the turtle began to speak. "I would gladly live a little longer," it

said. "Be merciful and set me free, and I shall find a way to prove my gratitude."

"Well," said Urashi to himself, "I can soon catch some fish, and they will be just as good to eat or to sell as this tortoise—in fact, better. Why should I kill the poor thing and keep it from



enjoying all the years it may yet have to live? No, no! I will not be so cruel."

Then, addressing the tortoise, he said, "You can have your freedom," and he threw it back into the sea.

Shortly afterward he lay down in his boat and fell asleep, and as he slept there came up from beneath the waves a beautiful girl. She got into the boat and Urashi awoke. "I am the daughter of the Sea-god," she said, "and I live with my father in a splendid palace beyond the waters. It was not a tortoise which you caught just now, and which you were so kind as to throw back into the water instead of killing. It was myself. My father the Sea-god sent me to find out whether you were good or bad. We now know that you do not like to do cruel things, and so I have come to get you to return with me. You shall marry me if you choose, and we will live happily together for a thousand years in the beautiful palace beyond the deep blue sea."

Then Urashi took one oar and the Sea-god's daughter took the other, and they rowed, and they rowed, and they rowed, till, at last, they came to the palace where the Sea-god lived and ruled over all the dragons and the tortoises and the fishes. The palace walls were of coral, and the trees round

about had emeralds for leaves and rubies for fruit, and everything was as beautiful as it could be.

Urashi married the lovely princess, and they lived happily in the Sea-god's palace for a year. Then Urashi said to the princess, "I am very happy here, yet I would like to visit my home and see my father and mother and brothers and sisters. Let me go to them, I pray you; I will soon return."

"I don't like to have you go," said she. "I am afraid something dreadful will happen to you. However, if you cannot be contented otherwise, I give my permission."

"It will be only for a very short time," said Urashi.

"Go then," responded the princess; "but here is a magic box you must carry with you. Nothing can harm you as long as you have it in your possession, unless you open it. If you do that you will never be able to come back."

Urashi promised to take great care of the box and not to open it on any account. Then he got into a boat and rowed away, and at last he came to the shores of his own country.

But what had happened while he had been absent? Where had his father's cottage gone? What had become of the village in which he used to live?

The mountains were there as before, but the trees on them had been cut off. The little brook that ran close by his father's home was still running, but there were no women washing clothes in it any more. Urashi wondered how everything could have changed so much in one short year.

Two men chanced to pass along the beach, and Urashi went to them and said, "Can you tell me where the cottage is that used to stand here? It belonged to a fisherman who had a son Urashi."

"What!" exclaimed the men, "do you speak of Urashi? He was drowned nearly four hundred years ago, while he was out fishing. His parents and his brothers and sisters, and all their children and grandchildren, are dead long ago. Yes, Urashi was drowned. He went out in his boat to fish, and neither he nor his boat were seen afterward. It is an old, old story. How can you be so foolish as to ask after his father's cottage? It fell to pieces a great many years before our time."

Then the thought flashed across Urashi's mind that the Sea-god's palace beyond the waves must be a part of fairyland, and that one day there was probably as long as a year in this world. Therefore he had in reality been away hundreds of years.

Of course there was no use of staying where he

was any longer, now that all his friends were dead and buried, and even their homes gone. So Urashi was in a great hurry to get back to his wife beyond the sea. But he could not think in his haste which way he ought to go. "Perhaps there are directions in this box the princess gave me," he said.

He opened it, and no sooner had he done that than a white cloud came out of the box and floated away over the sea. Urashi shouted to the cloud to stop and come back into the box, for he at once recollected how strictly the princess had commanded that the box should not be opened. He knew now he would never be able to go again to the Sea-god's palace, and he rushed about and screamed with sorrow. But soon he could not run or shout any more. His hair had grown as white as snow, his face had become wrinkled, and his back was bent like that of a very old man. Then his breath stopped, and he fell dead on the beach. If he had not forgotten and disobeyed, he might still be living with the princess in the palace beyond the blue sea waves, where the trees have leaves of emeralds and rubies grow on them for fruit.

LAME MOLLY

THERE was once a big old country mansion where the people of the house kept two servant maids, and these maids were in the habit of leaving a bucket of clean water every night in the kitchen chimney corner for the pixies. This favor was very much appreciated by the little fairy folk, and in return they never failed to drop some silver money into the water, and the maids would find the silver each morning in the bottom of the bucket.

Once, however, the maids went to bed without remembering about the water for the pixies. The little people found the empty bucket and were greatly disappointed. So they whisked upstairs to the maids' bedroom, crawled through the keyhole, and began to exclaim against the laziness and neglect of the damsels.

One of the maids awoke, and after hearing what the pixies had to say, she jogged her fellow servant and said, "Molly, rouse up! We forgot the water



for the pixies, and here they are in our room telling us we must go down and get it for them.”

But Molly was angry because she had been disturbed out of a comfortable sleep, and pettishly declared that for her part she would not stir out of bed to please all the pixies in England.

“Very well,” said her companion, “then stay where you are, but I shall go down and fill the bucket.”

This she did, and when she returned to the bedroom she found the elves engaged in a loud and stern debate as to what punishment should be inflicted on the lazy lass who would not stir for their pleasure. Some proposed pinches and blows, others to spoil her new bonnet and ribbons. One talked of sending her the toothache, another of giving her a red nose; but this last was voted too severe a punishment for a pretty young woman.

Finally they decided she should have a lame foot which could only be cured by a certain moorland herb. The long and learned and difficult name of this herb was pronounced by the elfin judge very distinctly. It was a name of seven syllables, and the good-natured maid tried with might and main to remember what it was. She said it over and over, and she tied a string around her finger to assist her memory. At length, feeling that she had the word as sure as her own name, she dropped asleep and did not wake till morning.

Whether her head was like a sieve that lets out as fast as it takes in, or whether the over-exertion to remember caused her to forget, certain it is that when she opened her eyes she knew nothing at all of the matter.

There was no question about what had happened, for Molly, who had been perfectly well the day before, was now so lame she could barely limp around. Her companion did the best she could to recall the strange, seven-syllable name of the herb which would effect a cure; but it was hopelessly gone from her mind.

So year after year Molly went lame, until one day she was out on the moor with a rogue of a boy. She kept to a path, but the boy rambled about here and there, and presently came running to her to show an odd-looking plant he had picked. As he drew near he struck her with it playfully several times, and one blow chanced to hit her lame foot. The plant must have been the one with the long name, for from that moment Molly's lameness was gone, and when the next May Day came, and she danced with the other lasses on the village green, she was the most active and graceful of any of them.

THE GARDEN OF PARADISE

THERE was once a young prince whose grandmother, when he was a very little boy just beginning to go to school, used to tell him that every flower in the Garden of Paradise tasted like the sweetest of cakes. "If you could only go to that garden," said she, "the more of the flowers you ate, the more you would know. You would not have the trouble of learning your lessons at school, in geography, history, arithmetic, and the rest."

The prince thought that such a way of getting his lessons would just suit him, but his grandmother was unable to give him any information as to where this wonderful garden was to be found. He looked in his books. They were many and beautiful, and told about all the countries and peoples in the world; yet there was not in them a word of what he most wanted to know, which was where to find the Garden of Paradise.

His desire to see this garden continued even till

he was a young man. When he was eighteen years old he one day went into the forest. To wander there was his chief delight. Evening approached, the clouds gathered, the rain poured down, and it was as dark as it is at night in the deepest well. The prince slipped in the wet grass and stumbled over the stones. Everything was dripping with water, and he had not a dry thread on him. His strength was almost gone when he saw, just ahead, a large lighted cavern. In the middle of the cavern



burned a huge fire, at which a full-grown stag with branching antlers was being roasted whole. An aged woman, but big and strong, hovered about

the fire, throwing on it one piece of wood after another. "Come nearer," said she when she saw the prince, "and dry your clothes."

He thanked her, and sitting down by the fire held his hands out to the warmth ; but the cavern was very chilly. "There is a terrible draught here," said he.

"It will be still worse when my sons come home," said the woman. "You are now in the Cavern of the Winds, and the four Winds are my sons."

"Where are they now?" asked the prince.

"I can't say," replied the woman. "They do as they please, and most likely they are playing at football with the clouds. They are rough fellows. However, I can control them. Do you see those four sacks hanging on the wall? Whenever this son or that does not behave to suit me, I make him get into a sack, and there he has to stay till I choose to let him out. But here comes one of them."

It was the North Wind. He brought with him freezing coldness, flakes of snow floated in the air around him, hailstones bounded on the ground at his feet, and there were long icicles hanging from his beard. He was dressed in a jacket and trousers of bears' skin, and a sealskin cap was on his head.

"You look frost-bitten!" said the prince.

"Frost-bitten!" repeated the North Wind, and he laughed aloud. "Frost is my greatest delight. But what spindle-shanked boy are you? How did you get into the Cavern of the Winds?"

"He is my guest," said the old woman, "and if you are not content with this explanation you shall go into the sack."

So the North Wind turned away from the prince and began to tell his mother how he had spent the last month, for it was only once a month that he and his brothers visited their home. "I come from the Arctic Ocean," said he. "I have been with a Russian whaleship to a desolate polar island. It was a glorious place, all snow and ice and barren rocks, and with one lonely shed built from a wreck and covered with the skins of whales. The fishing began, and then I remembered my part of the sport. I made the great iceberg mountains surround the ship. Oh, how the crew shouted! but I shouted still louder. They were obliged to throw their cargo into the sea, and I shook snowflakes over them and drove them southward. They will never come again to that island."

"You have told us enough," said the old woman. "Here is your brother of the West."

The West Wind held in his hand a club of

mahogany wood, and he wore a slouched hat, and looked like a wild man.

"Whence come you?" asked his mother.

"From the forest wastes," said he, "where I raised such a storm that the primeval old trees crashed to the ground, broken to splinters. I have cut capers on the plains. I have ridden wild horses and shaken cocoanut trees. Ah, yes!"

Now came the South Wind wearing a turban and a flowing mantle. "It is wretchedly cold here," he said, throwing more wood on the fire. "One can easily feel that the North Wind has arrived before me."

"Sit down on yonder stone," said the old woman, "and tell me where you have been."

"In Africa, mother," he answered. "There I joined a party of Hottentots in a lion hunt. An ostrich ran races with me, but I am swifter than he. I came to the sands of a desert and met a caravan. The desert was so vast it seemed to have no end. The sun burnt from above, and the sand scorched from below. The sand was fine and loose and I danced about in it and whirled it up in huge clouds. What a dance that was! The caravan was buried and lies there beneath the sand on the wide, lonely desert."

"You have done very badly," said the mother. "Into the sack with you!" And before he was prepared for anything of the sort she seized him, doubled him up, and popped him into a sack.

That was not to his liking, and he kicked so the sack was kept rolling about the ground. Then the mother sat down on it, and the South Wind was obliged to be still.

"These are desperately wild fellows," said the prince.

"Yes, truly," answered she, "but they must obey. Here is the fourth."

This was the East Wind, dressed like a Chinese. "Well, and do you come from the Garden of Paradise?" the old woman asked.

"I go there to-morrow," the East Wind answered. "It is a hundred years to-morrow since I was there. I now come from China, where I have been playing about a bell tower and making the bells clink 'Tsing, tsang, tsu!'"

"You are mischievous," said the old woman. "It is well thou goest to-morrow to the Garden of Paradise. Your visits there always make you gentler and more mannerly."

She now rose and released the South Wind from

the sack and said, "It is time that we had something to eat."

The stag was lifted from the fire and they all gathered round it and ate heartily. The prince sat by the side of the East Wind, and they soon became friends. "I wish you would tell me where the Garden of Paradise is situated," said the prince.

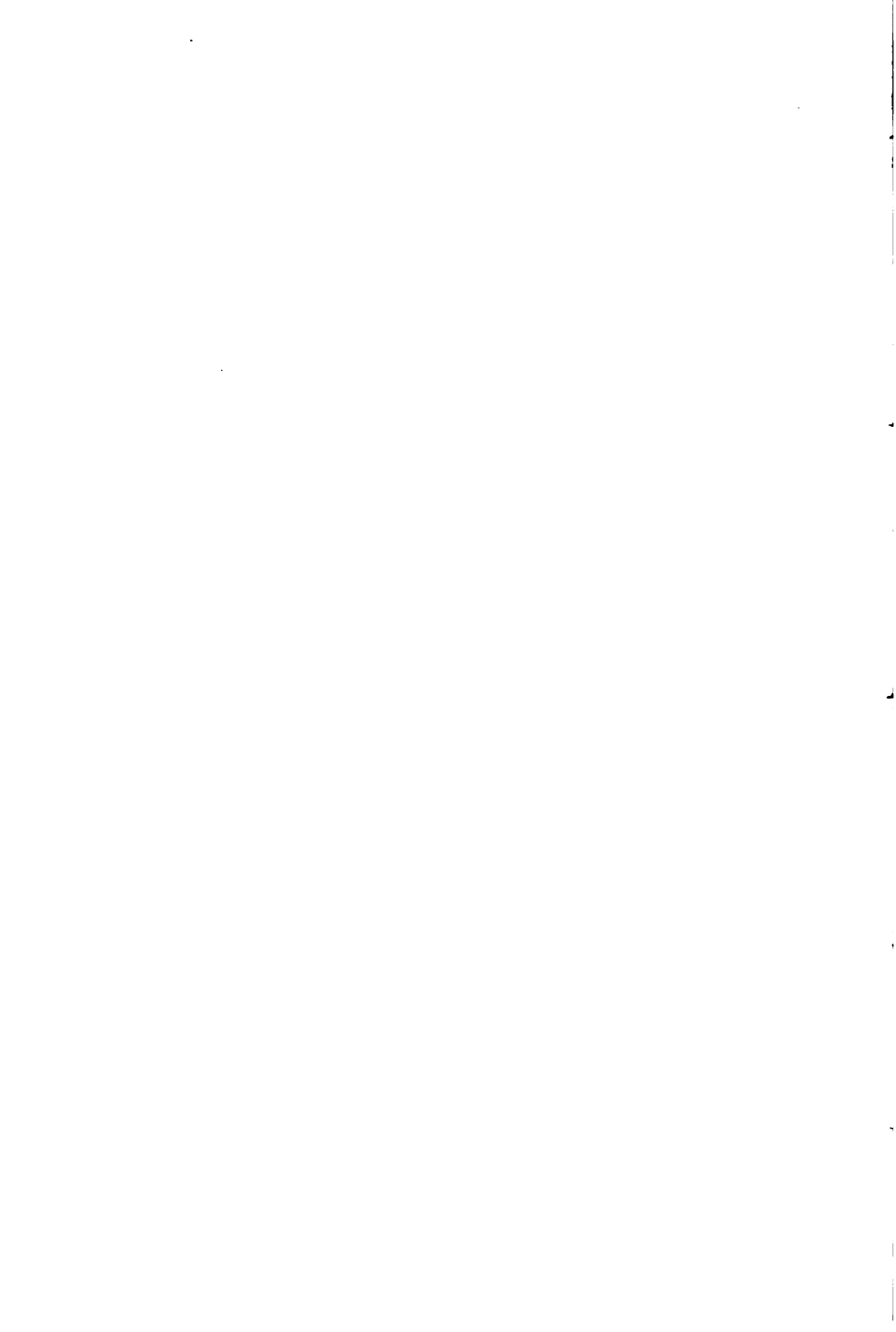
"If you wish to go there," the East Wind replied, "come with me to-morrow ; but I must inform you that no human being has been to the Garden of Paradise since the time of Adam and Eve. When they were driven out the garden sank down into a cavern of the earth. It, however, retained its warm sunshine and all its splendor, and there it is now, just as beautiful as it ever was, and it is the dwelling-place of the Fairy Queen. Do you wish to go there with me?"

"Nothing would please me better," responded the prince.

They finished eating and all went to sleep. Early in the morning the prince awoke, and was not a little astonished to find himself far up above the clouds. He was seated on the back of the East Wind, who kept tight hold of him, and they were so high that the scene below with its forests and



The prince on the back of the East Wind



fields, rivers and lakes appeared like a huge colored map.

"Good morning," said the East Wind. "You can just as well sleep longer."

"No," said the prince, "I have slept enough. I am afraid it was uncivil for me to depart without taking leave of your mother and brothers."

"That can be excused," responded the East Wind, "as we started before you were awake."

Now they flew faster than before—how fast might be seen by the tops of the trees whose branches and leaves rustled as the Wind passed over, and by the seas and lakes; for, as the Wind swept on, the waves rose higher and the large ships bowed low like swans in the water. The prince was so delighted with the sight of the ships bounding along over the white-capped waves that he clapped his hands; but the East Wind begged him to sit quiet lest he should fall.

The eagle flew swiftly over the dark woods, but the East Wind flew still more swiftly. "Now you can see the Himalaya Mountains," said the East Wind. "They are the highest mountains in the world."

Then they turned more to the south and presently inhaled the fragrance of spices and flowers. Figs

and pomegranates were growing wild; red and white grapes hung from the vines. Here the East Wind and the prince descended and stretched themselves on the soft grass, while the flowers nodded to them as if they wished to say, "Welcome, welcome!"

"Are we now in the Garden of Paradise?" asked the prince.

"No, not yet," answered the East Wind; "but we shall be there soon. Do you see yonder lofty cliff and the cave in front of which the vines hang like a green curtain? That cave leads to the Garden of Paradise. Wrap your cloak about you. The sun burns here, but as soon as we enter the cave you will find the air as cold as ice."

They rose and went into the cave. Oh, how freezing it was there! But the cold did not last long. In places the cave was so low that they were obliged to creep along on their hands and knees, and again it was high and broad. After a time the East Wind pointed to where the loveliest blue light was beaming to meet them. The rocks overhead became more and more like mists, and at last were as clear and bright as a white cloud in the moonlight. They now breathed the balmiest air, fresh as among the mountains, and as fragrant

as among the roses of the valley. Here flowed a river, as clear as the air itself. Gold and silver fish swam in the river, and purple eels which emitted blue sparks at every motion were playing beneath the surface, and the broad leaves of the water-lilies shone with all the colors of the rainbow. A bridge of marble, cunningly and delicately carved, led over the water.

As the prince was conducted by the East Wind across this bridge the flowers and leaves began to sing the sweetest songs about his childhood in wavy, mellow tones such as no human voice could imitate. He saw lions and tigers and other fierce beasts playing on the grass beneath the trees, perfectly tame and harmless, and he saw the shyest of the forest creatures rambling about wholly without fear.

The prince and his companion were met by the Fairy Queen. Her garments were as radiant as the sun, and her countenance was full of gentleness. She was young and beautiful, and the fairest of maidens followed her. After speaking for a time with the East Wind she took the prince by the hand and led him into her palace. She showed him its splendors, and, last of all, they came into a high, spacious hall in the midst of which stood a

large tree loaded with golden apples that hung like oranges among the green leaves. This was the Tree of Knowledge.

They now went out and entered a boat, and no sooner had they pushed off from the shore than the boat stood still and the land began to move and all the countries in the world appeared to glide past. First came the snow-covered Alps with their clouds and dark fir forests and the herdsmen singing merrily in the valleys. Then came Australia with its strange trees, its strange animals, and its savages dancing to barbarous music. Now Egypt's



towering pyramids, overthrown columns, and ruined temples sailed past. The shore continued to move, disclosing country after country, and in the final

scene the aurora beamed over the icy mountains of the north.

The prince was very happy. "May I stay here always?" he asked as they returned to the land.

"That depends on yourself," answered the fairy. "If you refrain from doing what is forbidden, you need never go away. But examine yourself. If you are not strong enough, return with the East Wind who brought you. Here he comes to meet us. He is ready now to fly back and will not return for a hundred years. The time will pass in the garden as if it were only a hundred hours; but that is a long time for temptation. Every evening when I leave you I must invite you to come with me. But beware of attending to my call. Do not follow, for every step will increase the temptation. I shall go into the hall where the Tree of Knowledge stands, for I sleep under the tree's drooping branches. If you come after me and so much as touch me, Paradise will sink from your sight and be lost to you, and sorrow and care will be your inheritance."

"I will stay here," said the prince.

"Then be strong," said the East Wind, "and we shall see each other again after a hundred years. Farewell!"

The East Wind spread out his great wings, and the storks and pelicans, like a streaming ribbon, flew after him and kept him company to the boundary of the garden.

“Now we will begin our dances,” said the fairy, “and when the sun is sinking I shall stop dancing and leave you. As I go I shall beckon and call to you. Thus I must do every evening for a hundred years. But do not heed my call, and every day your strength will increase till at last you will not even think of following. This evening is the first time. I have warned you.”

The fairy then led the prince into a large hall around the borders of which was a double row of white, transparent lilies, and the yellow stamens in each flower formed a little golden harp that gave forth most delicious music. So they danced, and the fairy’s maidens danced with them and sang how delightful life was, and that the Garden of Paradise would flourish forever.

By and by the sun went down, and the prince saw the farther end of the hall open, and there stood the Tree of Knowledge, shining with such splendor that his eyes were dazzled. The fairy was leaving him, but she turned and nodded and said, “Come with me, come with me.”

Immediately he forgot all her warnings and hastened to follow her. The spicy fragrance around became stronger, and the harps sounded even more sweetly. Now the fairy had reached the tree. She bent the boughs asunder and in another moment was concealed behind them.

The prince paused. "I have not yet sinned," said he. "Neither will I."

For some time he stood irresolute, and then he pushed aside the boughs and saw the fairy lying asleep, beautiful as only the Fairy of Paradise could be. But he noticed tears on her long eyelashes. "Weepest thou on my account?" whispered he, bending over her. "Weep not, loveliest of creatures!" and he kissed her softly on the forehead.

Instantly there was a clap of thunder louder and deeper than any he had ever heard. The charming fairy, the wonderful palace, the beautiful garden, were gone in a twinkling, and the prince lay for a long time as if dead. A cold rain was beating in his face and a cutting wind was whistling around him when he regained his senses. "What have I done?" he sighed as he opened his eyes.

He sat up and found he was in the forest, close to the Cavern of the Winds. The mother of the Winds sat by his side. She looked angry, and

raising her arm she said, "The very first evening! Well, it is just as I expected. If you were my son you should go forthwith into the sack."

Now there came from the forest depths a strong, old man with a scythe in his hand and with large



black wings growing from his shoulders. It was Father Time. "You have lost Paradise," said he, addressing the prince; "but perhaps not forever. You still have the chance to live a good life; and if you do, I shall one day carry you to the Garden of Paradise, and there you may dwell always."

THE WILD DUCKS AND THE GOOSE

THERE was once an old man who lived in a little round house, like this. 

And the house had a window which was right here. 

In front of the old man's house was a nice large yard, like this. 

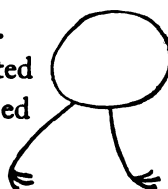
And a path led from the front door through the middle of the yard to the gate, like this. 

Not far away was a pond. 

Here it is.

And  there were two brooks that flowed into the pond. One brook started in a little clump of bushes down here and flowed to the pond, like this.

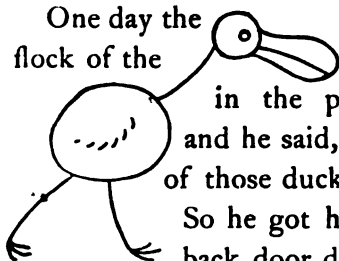
The  other brook started in a clump of bushes off here and flowed like that.



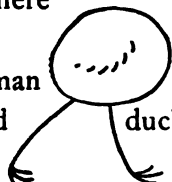
The wild ducks liked to come to the pond and swim around in it, and here they are.



One day the old man saw a flock of the wild ducks alight in the pond, and he said, "I'm going to have some of those ducks."

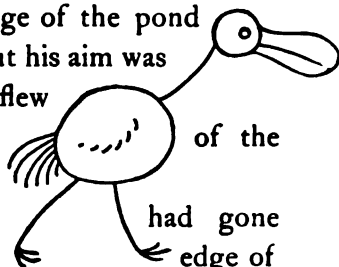


old man

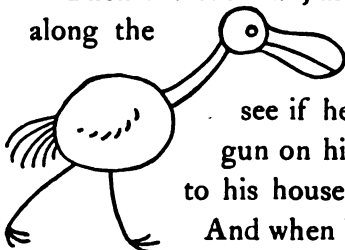


So he got his gun and ran out of his back door down to the pond, like this.

As soon as he got to the edge of the pond he fired his gun, BANG! But his aim was not good and the ducks all flew away from the other end of the pond, like this.



Then the old man, after he had gone along the



edge of the pond a little way to

see if he had hit anything, took his gun on his shoulder and walked back to his house, like this.

And when he got home, he said, "Well, well, I made a goose of myself that time"; and there is the goose.

THE GIANT WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

THERE was once a king who was exceedingly fond of hunting the wild beasts in his forests. One day he followed a stag so far and so long that he lost his way. Alone and overtaken by night, he was glad to find himself near a small thatched cottage in which lived a charcoal burner. The king went to the cottage and met the man who lived in it at the door.

"If you will kindly show me the way to the highroad," said the king, "you shall be handsomely rewarded."

"I would gladly go with you thither," replied the charcoal burner, "but a baby has come to us to-day, and I cannot leave my wife. Will you pass the night under our roof? There is a truss of sweet hay in the loft on which you can rest, and to-morrow I will be your guide."



The king accepted the invitation and went to bed in the loft. But at midnight he was awakened by noises in the house, and looking through a crack in the flooring he saw that the charcoal burner and his wife were asleep, and that the babe lay in a cradle beside which sat an old woman dressed in white and holding a lighted taper. While he looked the old woman began to speak, and he heard her say, "On this boy I bestow the gift of confronting great dangers and of living to a good old age, and I bestow on him for his wife the princess born at the selfsame hour as he, the daughter of the very king sleeping above in the loft."

At these words the light went out and silence reigned. The king was greatly troubled and

wondered exceedingly. All the rest of the night he lay awake thinking how to prevent the prophecy of the old woman from coming true.

When the king came down from the loft in the morning the baby was crying, and the charcoal burner was trying to soothe it. At the same time the man was bemoaning his poverty. "How shall I take care of this child?" said he. "We are very poor and the babe will have hard fare and can only grow up to a rough life in the forest."

"Confide the child to me," said the king. "I will look after him, and you shall be given a sum of money large enough to keep you without having to burn charcoal for a living."

The poor man agreed, and the king went away promising to send someone for the child. The queen and courtiers thought it would be a pleasant surprise to the king to hear that a charming little princess had been born while he was away. But when he arrived at his palace and they told him what had happened, instead of being pleased, he frowned. Then he called one of his servants and handed him a purse of money, saying, "Go to the charcoal burner's cottage, where I spent last night, and give the man this purse in exchange for a newborn infant. On the way back drown the child,

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and if you fail in this your own life shall be the forfeit."

The servant went to the forest and was given the child in a basket. On his return journey he stopped in the middle of a bridge that stretched across a wide and deep river and threw the basket with the baby in it into the water.



The servant reported to the king what he had done, and the king fully believed the child was drowned. But he was mistaken. The little one drifted pleasantly along in his basket and slumbered as sweetly as if his mother had sung him to sleep. At length a fisherman who was mending his nets before his cottage door saw the basket floating down the river. He jumped into his boat and rowed out to it, and was quite astonished to find a pretty, smiling little baby inside. He was glad,

too, and as soon as he reached the shore he hurried with the basket and baby in his hands to tell his wife the good news.

"Look!" said he, "we have long wanted a son, and here is a beautiful little boy the river has sent us."

The woman was delighted and took the infant and loved it as her own child. They named the boy Paul.

The river flowed on, years passed away, and the little baby grew into a handsome youth. In all the villages round there was none to compare with him.

It happened one summer day when Paul was about twenty years old that the king was riding unattended on a journey to another part of the kingdom, and the heat being very great he stopped before the fisherman's hut to ask for a drink of water. Paul brought it to him. The king regarded the young man attentively, and then, turning to the fisherman who was at work near-by chaining some fish, said, "This is a fine-looking lad. Is he your son?"

"He is and he is n't," replied the fisherman. "I found him when he was a tiny baby floating down the stream in a basket. So we adopted him and brought him up as our own."

The king became as pale as death, for he guessed that the young man was the same child he had ordered to be drowned. Recovering himself, he got down from his horse and said to the fisherman, "I want a trusty messenger to take a letter to the palace. Could you send the lad with it?"

"With pleasure," was the fisherman's response, "and your majesty may be sure of its safe delivery."

Thereupon the king wrote to the queen as follows:

"The man who brings you this letter is the most dangerous of all my enemies. Have his head cut off at once. This must be done before my return. Such is my will and pleasure."

He carefully folded the missive and sealed it with the royal seal. Paul took the letter and set off immediately, but he had to pass through a forest, where the trees grew so thick and the paths were so lonely and unfamiliar that he went astray, and the gloom of evening came on while he was still in the deep woods. He was stumbling along as best he could when he met an old woman who said, "Where are you going, Paul?"

"I am the bearer of a letter from the king to the queen," he answered, "but I have missed the path

to the palace. Could you, good mother, put me on the right road?"

"Impossible to-day, my child," said she. "It is getting dark. My cottage is close by. Stay with me to-night. You will not be with a stranger, for I am your godmother."

Paul agreed to do as she wished, and they entered a pretty little cottage that seemed suddenly to have risen out of the earth. After he had gone to bed the old woman changed his letter for another which ran thus:

"Immediately on the receipt of this letter introduce the bearer to the princess, our daughter. I have chosen this young man for our son-in-law, and it is my wish that they be married before I return to the palace. Such is my pleasure."

The next day the old woman showed Paul the right road, and he reached the palace and delivered the letter. When the queen had read it she ordered everything to be prepared for the wedding. Both she and her daughter were greatly pleased with Paul and were quite willing to act promptly. The wedding took place, and nothing disturbed the happiness of the newly married pair until the king returned, a few days later. On hearing what had taken place he was very angry and demanded of

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the queen the reason why she had not obeyed his orders.

"I did exactly what you asked me to do," she replied. "Come, read the letter you sent me. Here it is."

The king examined the letter very closely. The paper, handwriting, and seal were all undoubtedly his. He then called his son-in-law and questioned him about his journey. Paul hid nothing. He told how he had lost his way, and how he had passed the night in the cottage of an old woman in the forest.

"What was the old woman like?" asked the king, and from Paul's description he knew she was the same old woman he had seen twenty years before at the home of the charcoal burner, and whom he had heard prophesy the marriage of the child in the cottage to the king's daughter in the palace.

After some moments' thought the king said, "What is done is done; but before I accept you as my son-in-law you must bring me three golden hairs from the head of the giant Phœbus."

In this manner he thought to get rid of the young man, whose very presence was distasteful to him.

Paul sadly took leave of his wife and set off. "I know not which way to go," said he to himself, "but surely if I earnestly continue my search for this giant I shall in time succeed in finding him."

He walked on and on for a long time, over the mountains and across the valleys, until he reached the shore of a rockbound lake. There he found a boat and an aged boatman.



"May God bless you, boatman," said Paul.

"And you too, my young traveller," responded the old man. "Where are you going?"

"To the castle of the giant Phœbus for three of his golden hairs," Paul answered.

"Ah, then, I welcome you," said the boatman. "For a long weary time I have been waiting for such a messenger as you. I have ferried passengers across this lake these twenty years, and not one of them has done anything to help me. If you will promise that you will ask the giant Phœbus when I shall be released from my toil I will row you across without charge."

Paul promised and was rowed across to the opposite shore. He then continued his journey until he came to a large town. As he was entering it he met a funeral procession. The king of that country was following his father's coffin with tears running down his cheeks.

"May God comfort you in your distress," said Paul.

"Thank you, good traveller," responded the king. "Where are you going?"

"To the castle of the giant Phœbus to get three of his golden hairs," Paul answered.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the king. "What a pity

you did not come sooner! We have long been expecting such a messenger as you. Our most valued possession is an apple-tree that bears the fruit of everlasting youth. Whoever eats one of the apples, no matter how sick he may be, it will cure him and make him young. For the last twenty years neither flower nor fruit has been found on the tree. Will you ask the giant Phœbus the cause of this?"

"That I will do with pleasure," said Paul.

He resumed his journey, and as he went on he came to a large and beautiful city where all was sad and silent. Near the gate sat an old man leaning on his cane, and Paul stopped to speak with him. "May God bless you, sir," said he.

"And you too, my handsome young traveller," responded the man. "Where are you going?"

"To the castle of the giant Phœbus to get three of his golden hairs," Paul answered.

"Ah!" cried the man joyfully, "you are the very messenger for whom we have long waited. We have here a well, the water of which has the magic property of immediately curing the invalids who drink of it, even though they are at death's door. But twenty years ago this well went dry, and there has been no water in it since. If you will get the

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giant Phœbus to tell you how the flow of water may be restored, our king will reward you royally."

Paul agreed to do as the man requested, and he travelled on through a dark forest. In the midst of the forest he came to a large meadow with lovely flowers growing everywhere in it, and in its centre stood a castle built of gold. This was the home of the giant Phœbus. So brilliant with light was it that it seemed to be on fire. The young man entered an open door and found an old woman spinning.

"I am pleased to see you, Paul," was her greeting.

She was his godmother who had given him shelter in her cottage when he was the bearer of the king's letter. "Tell me what brings you here from such a distance," she went on.

"The king, whose daughter I have married, will not take me into his family unless I bring him three golden hairs from the head of the giant Phœbus," explained Paul. "So I came here to get them."

The old woman laughed. "I am the giant's mother," said she, "and Phœbus is none other than the shining sun. At dawn he is a little child, at midday a grown man, and at eventide he is decrepit

and old, looking as if he had lived a hundred years. I will see that you have the three hairs from his head. I am not your godmother for nothing. However, it is not safe for you to be seen here. My son is a good lad, but when he comes home he is hungry and would probably order you to be roasted for his supper. Here is a big basket. I will turn it upside down and you shall hide underneath."

But before she concealed him as she had suggested, Paul begged her to obtain from the giant answers to the three questions he had been asked while on his way.

"I will do so, certainly," she replied, "and you can listen to what he says."

Suddenly a blast of wind howled round the castle, and the Sun entered by a western doorway. He was an old man with golden hair.

"What's the matter?" cried he, sniffing the air suspiciously. "Surely, mother, you have someone here."

"Light of day," she responded, "whom could I have here? The fact is that in your journeys the scent of human beings is always with you, and when you come home at evening it is with you still."

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But the giant was not satisfied, and he began to search about the room, whereat the dame scolded him roundly, saying, "I have only just swept up and made the place tidy, and here you are turning everything topsy-turvy. Do sit down and eat your supper."

So the giant searched no more, but sat down to eat. When he finished he laid his golden head on



the old woman's lap and went to sleep. Then she pulled out a hair and he awoke. "What do you want, mother?" asked he.

"Nothing, my son," was her response; "but while you slept I was thinking, and in my thoughts I saw a large town where there was a well, the water of which cured all diseases. For the last twenty years the well had been dry and no one knew how to restore the flow of water."

"That is very simply done," said the giant. "The well was supplied by a spring, and in the channel that leads to the well a frog has lodged itself. Remove the frog and the water will flow again."

The giant now laid his head in the old woman's lap and soon was asleep once more. Then the old woman pulled out another golden hair, and he awoke. "What do you want, mother?" he asked.

"Nothing, my son, nothing," she replied, "but I have been thinking, and in my thoughts I saw a beautiful city where grew an apple-tree, the fruit of which had the power to make the old young again. A single apple eaten by an old man would restore to him the vigor and freshness of youth. For twenty years this tree had produced only leaves, and no one knew how to restore its fruitfulness."

"That can be done very easily," said the giant. "A snake hidden among the roots sucks the sap. Destroy the snake and the fruit will grow as before."

The giant again fell asleep, and the old woman pulled out a third hair. Instantly he awoke and exclaimed angrily, "Now look here, mother, why will you not let me sleep?"

"Lie down, my darling," said she. "Do not disturb yourself, but I must tell you of what I was thinking as you slept. I seemed to see an aged boatman on the shore of a lake, and he complained that he had been ferrying people across for twenty years without anyone coming to take his place, and he was begging to know how much longer he must continue at the task."

"Ah!" said the giant, "he is a silly fellow and no mistake. All he needs to do is to put his oars in the hands of the first comer and jump ashore. Whoever receives the oars will have to replace him as ferryman. But leave me in peace, mother, and do not wake me again. I have to rise very early."

Next morning the wind whistled round the castle, and, instead of an aged man, a beautiful child awoke on the old woman's lap. It was the glorious

sun. He bade her good-bye and flew out of an eastern doorway.

Then the old woman turned over the basket under which Paul lay concealed and said, "Look, here are the three golden hairs, and you have heard the answers to your three questions. May God direct you and send you a prosperous journey. You will not see me again, for you have no further need of me."

He thanked her gratefully and started homeward. On arriving at the city with the unfruitful apple-tree he was asked by the king what news he brought.

"Excellent," replied Paul. "One could not wish for better. Dig about your apple-tree and kill the snake that lies among the roots and the tree will bear just as it did formerly."

All turned out as he had said, and no sooner was the snake destroyed than the tree burst forth into a cloud of blossoms. Then the king gave Paul twelve raven-black horses laden with as much wealth as they could carry.

Later in his journey he came to the town with the dried-up well. "What word do you bring from the giant Phœbus?" asked the king.

"Have your well cleaned out," said Paul, "and remove the frog you will find obstructing the flow

of water in the passage that connects the well with the spring."

The king had this done, and he was so rejoiced to see the wonderful water return that he gave Paul twelve swan-white horses and as much gold and silver as they could carry.

Paul now went on until he came to the shore of the rockbound lake. There he found the aged boatman, and after crossing with his twenty-four horses he told him he could gain release from his labor by placing the oars in the hands of the first traveller who wished to be ferried over.

At length Paul reached the palace of his royal father-in-law, and the old king could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the giant's three golden hairs. As for the princess, she wept with joy to have her dear one with her again. "But how did you get such splendid horses and so much wealth?" she asked.

"They were given me," he replied, "for hardships endured and services rendered. I showed one king how to regain possession of the Apples of Youth and another I told the secret of reopening the spring of water that gives health and life."

"Apples of Youth! Water of Life!" interrupted the king. "I will certainly go and find

these treasures for myself. Ah, what joy ! Having eaten of the apples I shall become young once more, and having drank of the water of life, I shall be free from all aches and diseases."

So he started off in search of the magic apples and water, and at length he came to the shore of the rockbound lake. He beckoned to the ferryman, who took him into his boat. But just as they came to the other shore the ferryman thrust the oars into the king's hands and ran away, leaving him to do the ferrying for the future. He may be there still, for he has not yet returned.

THREE FEATHERS

THERE was once a girl who had a husband she had never seen. The way of it was this — he was only at home during the night, and he would never have any light in the castle where they lived. The girl thought it strange that he came and went as he did and never allowed her a sight of him, and, besides, her friends were always telling her there must be something wrong with him. “Like enough,” said they, “he has some great deformity which he wishes to conceal from you.”

At last, when he came home one night, she suddenly lit a candle and saw him. To her joy she found him so handsome she thought no man in the world could be handsomer. But immediately he changed into a bird and said, “Now you have seen me you shall never see me again unless you are willing to serve seven years and a day for me, so that I may become a man once more.”

Then he told her to pull three feathers from his breast, and by means of these feathers she could

have whatever she wished for. She took the feathers and the bird flew away.

The girl became a laundry-maid in a great house, where she engaged to stay for seven years and a day. She did her work easily enough, for she would simply take the feathers and say, "By virtue of my three feathers may the fire be lit and the clothes washed and ironed and folded and put away to my mistress's satisfaction."

She then had no more care about it. The feathers caused the work to be done, and done well. So the lady of the house was greatly pleased with the maid and declared that a better laundress she had never had.

Things went along very well till one day the butler said to her, "I want to speak with you about something, and I should have spoken before, only I feared it would vex you."

"Why should it vex me?" she replied. "We are fellow servants. Speak out."

"Well," said he, "you know I am a careful man. I have thirty pounds laid by, and I am minded to have a home of my own. How would you like me for a husband?"

"I would not like you for a husband at all," said she, and started off.

"Don't go," begged the butler. "Let us talk farther. You will never find a better man to marry than me. Pray reconsider," and he caught her arm.

"Oh, John!" she said, "I must go at once to the laundry and fasten the shutters. Don't you hear the wind blowing? Those shutters will be slashing and banging all night unless they are fastened."



"Never you trouble," replied the butler. "I'll attend to them. You wait here."

Off he ran to the laundry while she took her feathers and said, "By virtue of my three feathers may the shutters slash and bang till morning, and John not be able to fasten them nor yet get his fingers free from them."

So it was. Try as

he might, he could not fasten the shutters but that they would keep blowing open, and his fingers cleaved to them and he could not let go. There he was, wrestling with the shutters all night. However, when the sun rose in the morning, the blinds banged no more. He succeeded in closing them and his fingers loosed their hold. That the maid had bewitched the blinds he was quite certain, and he was very angry, but he said nothing to anybody about his experience for fear of being laughed at.

The butler paid no more attention to the maid, and some time passed. Then the coachman began to cultivate her friendship, and one evening he spoke with her as she stood looking out from her laundry door, and said, "You have always had a kind word for me, and I hope you will like me as well as I like you. I am not a bad sort of fellow, and you may be interested to know that I have sixty pounds laid away. If you will take me for your husband that money will furnish a little cottage very nicely and leave something to spare."

"But I don't want you for a husband!" she exclaimed, and turned and started to shut the door.

The coachman, however, thrust his foot in the way, and when she saw she could not close the door, she said, "Oh, dear, the clothes I washed

to-day are still hanging out on the lines. I must go and bring them in."

"No, no," said the coachman. "Let me go instead. You wait for me here in the laundry. It is a frosty night, and you'd be catching your death of cold there in the windy clothes-yard."

So the coachman went to get the clothes off the lines, while the girl took her feathers from her pocket and said, "By virtue of my three feathers may the clothes flap and blow about till morning, and may William neither be able to take them from the lines, nor yet remove his hands from them."

Then she went upstairs to bed and to sleep, while the coachman spent the night struggling with the flapping clothes in the windy clothes-yard. When morning brought release he raged to himself over what had happened, but he did not care to be everyone's jest, and so he said nothing of his experience to his fellow servants.

Not many days afterward the gardener dropped into the laundry and sat down near the girl to have a talk. "I have been with our master many years," said he, "and have saved up a good bit. You too have been here three years and must also have saved something. Let us put our money together and get married and have a home of our own."



“Well, well,” thought she, “he is just like the others. What shall I do with him?”

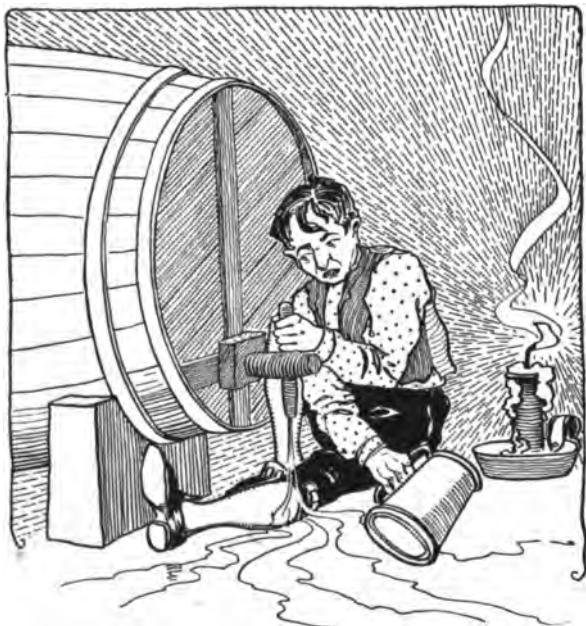
She rose to her feet and said, “I am going to the cellar to draw a mug of cider.”

“Wait,” said he. “Give me the mug and I will get the cider for you, and we will settle the little matter of which I spoke when I return.”

He went off with the mug in his hand, and she pulled out her feathers and said, “By virtue of my

three feathers may there be slopping and spilling, and may James not be able to fill the mug, or to take his hand from the spigot, or stop the flow of the cider until morning."

Thus it was. Try as he might to hold his hand steady it persisted in shaking and spilling all that



went into the mug. His other hand seemed to be fastened immovably to the spigot and he could not get away, nor could he turn off the flow of the cider. He was not released till sunrise. As it happened,

his master was up early that morning and saw him come out of the cellar wet and bedraggled. "Where have you been?" he asked sharply.

"Only to draw a mug of cider, your honor," replied James.

"You look as if you had been inside of the barrel," said his master. "How did you get so wet?"

James stammered and hesitated, but finally he had to tell the whole story. It was the laundry-maid who sent him for the cider, and when he got to the barrel he could not get away and there was slopping and spilling all night.

At breakfast the master spoke to his wife about what had occurred. "Something is wrong with that laundry-maid of yours," said he in conclusion, "and I think she had better be dismissed."

But his wife would not hear of the laundry-maid being blamed. "She's the best servant we have," said the lady. "It's really wonderful how well she does her work. She's worth all the rest of the servants put together."

So the maid stayed, and nothing more occurred that was unusual until one day the girl chanced to be in the hall and heard the butler, the coachman, and the gardener talking together outside. "Do

you know how that laundry-maid served me?" said the butler, and he told about the shutters.

"Ho!" exclaimed the coachman, "that was nothing to the way she treated me," and he told of the clothes flapping all the night.

"I fared worse still," said the gardener, and he told about the slopping of the cider.

Then they fell to disputing over which had suffered most, and the longer they talked the less they agreed. At last they became so angry they began fighting. In their scuffling they moved away from the house to the borders of a pond near-by,



and the first thing they knew all three tumbled in head over heels. That cooled their anger, and each went his way to change his dripping garments.

The girl never afterward heard them refer either to the troubles she had brought on them or to the dispute they had had with each other. She kept her place for seven years and a day, and then

her husband came, restored to human shape, and claimed her. He told her mistress he must now take her away, but he said nothing about the three magic feathers. So they bade the people of the house good-bye and gave presents to all the servants and drove off to their castle, where they lived happy ever after.

THE SIX COMRADES

THERE was once a man who was a soldier in the wars for many years, and he was brave and bold, but when the wars were ended he was sent about his business with only three farthings to show for all the time he had spent fighting in the army of his king.

"This is mean treatment," said he, "and I am not going to stand it. Wait till I find the right people to help me, and the king shall be made to give me the treasures of his whole kingdom."

Then, full of wrath, he walked on till he entered a forest, and there he came across a man who was uprooting trees as easily as if they were cornstalks. When this worker had pulled up six of the trees he paused, and our soldier said to himself, "Such a stout fellow as he would be a helper worth having," and he called to him, saying, "Friend, will you be my servant and travel with me?"

"Yes," replied the man, "but first I must carry this bit of wood home to my mother," and taking



The strong man and his load

one of the trees he twisted it around the other five and lifted the bundle on his shoulders and off he went with it.

He soon returned to the soldier, who said, "We two shall be a match for all the world."

After they had journeyed on together for a time they met a huntsman who was down on one knee taking careful aim with his gun.

"Huntsman," said the soldier, "tell me what it is you are going to shoot."

"Two miles from here," answered the huntsman, "there is a fly sitting on the bough of an oak-tree. I intend that my bullet shall hit the fly's head without injuring its body."

"Well," said the soldier, "shoot away and then come along with me. We three shall be a match for all the world."

The huntsman was quite willing to do as the soldier asked, and after he had shot and hit the fly's head he and his new-found friends went on together till they came to seven windmills whose sails were briskly whirling although not a breath of wind was stirring.

"I cannot imagine what turns the sails of these windmills on such a quiet day as this," said the soldier.

But when he had gone on with his followers some distance farther he saw a man sitting up in a tree with his cheeks puffed out, blowing.

"My good fellow, what are you doing up there?" asked the soldier.

"Oh," responded the man, "did you notice seven windmills you passed a while ago? I am blowing to make the sails go round."

"Come with me!" cried the soldier. "We four shall be a match for all the world."

So the blower climbed down and went on with the other three. Presently they came to a man who was standing on one leg. He had taken off the other leg and it was lying on the ground by his side.

"My friend," said the soldier, "why have you taken off that leg I see there?"

"I am a runner," answered he, "and in order to keep myself from going too fast, I have taken off a leg; for when I run with both I go faster than a bird can fly. I was about to pick up my leg and go on when you spoke."

"Come with me," said the soldier. "We five shall be a match for all the world."

The runner was willing, and they went on together. Soon they met a man wearing his hat tilted over one ear.

"Manners! my friend, manners!" cried the soldier. "Don't wear your hat like that. It makes you look like a simpleton. Put it on properly."

"I dare not put it straight," declared the man, "for if I did there would be such a terrible frost that the very birds flying through the air would freeze and fall dead to the ground."

"Come with me," said the soldier. "We six shall be a match for all the world."

The man said he would rather walk in company than alone, and the six comrades went on till they came to the city of the king, and the king had just proclaimed that whoever should run a race with his daughter and be victorious might become her husband; but if he lost the race he must also lose his head. The king's daughter was very swift and never yet had found anyone who could keep up with her, and the people all said that whoever attempted a race with her would surely fail and his life would be the forfeit.

But the soldier at once asked to be allowed to compete. "I however do not wish to run myself," he explained. "I have a servant who will run for me."

"Very well," said the king, "only in that case your servant and you both shall be beheaded if he loses the race."

"I agree to your conditions," replied the soldier, and the race was arranged for immediately.

When the princess appeared the soldier called the runner to him and had him put on his other leg. "Now be as nimble as you can," said the soldier, "and don't fail to win."

The princess and the runner were each given a pitcher, and the one who could go to a distant spring, fill the pitcher with water, and get back first would be declared the victor. They began to run at the same moment, but the princess, swift as she was, had hardly gone a dozen steps before the runner was out of sight, for his running was as if a sudden breeze swept by. In a short time he reached the spring, filled his pitcher, and began the return journey. He was half way back when he thought, "Why should I be in such haste? I have run even faster than usual, and it has wearied me. I will stop and rest."

So he set down his pitcher and stretched himself out on the ground. He knew he had plenty of time and saw no harm in waiting till the princess appeared. But it was very quiet there and the sun shone warmly on him and he fell asleep.

He still slept when the king's daughter came to where he was. She paused long enough to empty

his pitcher and then hurried on. "If that nap of his continues long enough I shall win," she said.

She arrived at the spring and was soon off again with her pitcher full of water. When she came to



the runner he had not yet awakened. Now all would have gone wrong for the soldier had not the huntsman, by great good fortune, ascended one of the towers of the king's castle to see how the race was progressing. From there he saw everything with his sharp eyes. "Oho!" he cried, "the runner sleeps, and unless he is aroused at once the day is lost. Well, the princess shall be no match for us if I can help it."

Then the huntsman loaded his gun and took careful aim at a block of wood on which the runner had rested his head. So true was the huntsman's aim that he shot away the wooden block without harming the sleeper in the least. Of course this served to awaken the runner, who jumped to his feet and saw that his pitcher was empty and that the king's daughter was already far ahead of him. However, he did not lose courage, and returning swiftly to the spring he filled his pitcher and was back at the castle just soon enough to defeat the princess.

The king was vexed and so was his daughter. They did not like the idea of her being the wife of a common soldier, and they consulted with each other how they could rid themselves of him and his companions. Presently the king said, "Daughter, trouble yourself no longer. I have thought of a way to be quit of these six rogues forever."

Then he had his servants prepare a delicious feast in a certain room, and as soon as the feast was ready he went to the six comrades and said, "You must now eat, drink, and be merry."

He led the way to the apartment where the table was spread, and they found themselves in a room that had an iron floor and iron walls and an iron door, while the windows were secured with heavy

iron bars. The six comrades thought this was a queer sort of an apartment. However, they were not much used to royal castles and did not suspect but that it was all right.

"Sit down and enjoy yourselves," said the king, and immediately he stepped outside and had the door locked and bolted.

This done, he ordered a big fire made beneath the room so that the iron floor should be red hot. The fire was started and the feasters soon began to feel the room growing very warm. They had no thought of the real reason for this, and the soldier said, "There has been a change in the weather. Open the door and windows that we may have a little air."

But door and windows were securely fastened, and then they guessed that the king intended to suffocate them.

"He shall not succeed, however," said the man who wore his hat tilted over one ear. "I will bring on a frost that will make the fire underneath us feel ashamed of itself."

So he set his hat straight on his head, and immediately there came such a frost that the heat vanished and the very food on the table began to freeze. After an hour or two had passed and the

king believed they must have all perished in the fearful heat, he caused the door to be opened and looked in. There sat the six men around the table safe and sound. The king gazed in astonishment at them a moment and then slamming the door turned on his servants and asked angrily, "Why did you not build the fire as I commanded?"

"We did," they replied. "Pray go down and see for yourself."

The king went to look, and sure enough an immense fire was burning underneath the room of iron. He concluded the six men had some way of protecting themselves from the heat that he knew not of, and that he must contrive a different method to get rid of them. He thought about this for awhile, and then he sent for the soldier and said, "If you will give up your claim to my daughter you may have as much gold as you can carry."

"All right," said the soldier, "only one of my servants will do the carrying instead of me. Let him have all the gold he can take away and I shall be satisfied. Have it ready for me in two weeks' time."

Then the soldier called together all the tailors in the kingdom and asked them to make for him as

large a sack as they could complete in fourteen days. When it was finished the strong man whom he had found in the forest rooting up trees took it on his shoulder and went to the king.

"Who is this big fellow with that great heap of bagging on his shoulder?" the king asked.

"He is the soldier's servant come for the gold you promised," replied the king's chief counsellor.

So the king ordered a ton of gold fetched, which it required sixteen men to carry. But the strong man took it up with one hand and tossed it into the sack saying, "Why don't you bring more at a time? This only fills one corner in the bottom of the bag."

Again and again the king sent the sixteen men back for gold, and when all his treasure had been brought the sack was still only half full.

"Bring me more," cried the strong man. "You agreed I should have all I could carry."

So couriers were sent forth to collect all the gold there was in the kingdom. Even when that had gone into the bag it was not quite full. "Never mind," said the strong man, "I will not look too closely. I can tie up the sack all the easier."

He tied it up then, and lifting it to his back walked off with his companions.

When the king saw all the wealth of his realm carried off by a single man he flew into a great passion and ordered his cavalry to mount and pursue the six comrades and take the sack away.

Two regiments soon overtook the soldier and his servants and shouted to them, "Halt, you rascals, you are our prisoners! Put down that sack of gold or we will cut you in pieces."

"What is it you are saying?" asked the blower. "Do you threaten us? I think I will help you to prance back to the king's castle, and you can tell your master that if he sends any more horsemen after us I will blow them all into the air, and he will never see them alive again."



Then the blower puffed out his cheeks and blew such a wind that it carried the cavalry before it head over heels back to the castle of the king. When the king heard the message that had been sent he said, "Well, let the fellows

alone. After all, they have some right on their side."

So the six comrades carried home their treasure and divided it and lived happily to the end of their days.

THE RUNAWAY CATS

MANY years ago there lived a teacher of music whose only companions were a faithful serving-woman and a beautiful cat. The cat's name was Gon. He was a handsome fellow with sleek coat, bushy tail, and such keen eyes that he could see even in the dark. His master loved him and would say, as the cat purred by his side in the evening, "Nothing shall part us, old friend."

Not far away, in the midst of a grove, lived a lady whose chief pet was a lovely little pussy named Koma, and as Koma had very winning ways her mistress delighted to watch her. Koma blinked so prettily, she ate so daintily, she licked her rose-red nose so carefully with her tiny tongue that the lady would catch her up and say fondly, "Koma, Koma, you are a good cat. You shall never leave me."

It so happened that Gon and Koma met and fell deeply in love. Gon was such a handsome fellow that there was not a cat maiden in the district but

would gladly have been his mate. However, after he had seen Koma he did not deign to notice any of them but her. The lovers were very happy planning for their future until they found that neither would be allowed to go and make its home with the other. Gon's master would not part with him; nor would Koma's mistress part with her. The music teacher would willingly have taken Koma to live with him, but her mistress declared it was impossible. Likewise the lady would gladly have received Gon into her household, but his master refused to consider such a plan.

At length the love of the couple grew to such a pitch that they determined to please themselves and to fly together from their homes, for they despaired of ever getting the music teacher and the lady of the grove to consent to their union. So one night when the moon shone full and round in the sky they started. The cats were light of heart as they scampered across the fields, and they never paused until the day broke. Then they were near a palace. It stood in a large park where were many stately trees.

"If only we could live in that palace how glorious it would be!" said Koma.

As she spoke a fierce dog caught sight of the two cats and bounded angrily toward them. Koma gave a cry of terror and sprang up a tree. Gon did not run. He stood ready to meet the dog's

attack. "Dear Koma shall see that I am a hero," said he, "and that I would rather lose my life than run away."

The dog was powerful and would have killed Gon, but just then a servant appeared and drove the dog off and carried Gon into the palace. Poor Koma was left alone to lament her loss.

The princess who lived in the palace was overjoyed when Gon was brought to her, and it was many days before he was



allowed out of her sight. Then he hunted near and far to find Koma, but in vain. "My Koma is lost to me forever," he sighed.

The palace of the princess was very splendid, and she would have been perfectly happy had it not been for one thing. A great snake wished to marry her and was always trying to come near her and urge her to accept him. A constant guard was kept, but still the serpent at times succeeded in getting into the palace. One afternoon, as the princess was playing softly to herself on her guitar, the snake crept unobserved past the guards and entered her room. But Gon was there, and he instantly sprang on the creature's neck and bit so furiously that the snake soon lay dead.

When the princess saw that Gon had risked his life for her, she was deeply moved. She stroked him and whispered kind words in his ear. He was praised by the whole household and fed on the daintiest morsels. But the loss of Koma dulled his pleasure.

One day Gon lay sunning himself before the door of the palace. Half asleep, he looked out on the world and thought of the moonlight night when he and Koma escaped from their former home. While he drowsed he heard a noise of strife in the

park. He leaped up and ran in the direction of the sound and found a big ruffian of a cat ill-treating a little one, that was too weak to defend herself. Gon flew to the little one's aid and drove the cruel cat away. Then he turned toward the cat he had rescued to ask if she were hurt. Koma, his long-lost love, stood before him. It was not the sleek beautiful Koma of other days, for she was now thin and sad, but her eyes sparkled when she saw that Gon was her deliverer.

The two cats went to the princess. They told her the story of their love, their flight, their separation, and their reunion, and she entered whole-heartedly into their new-found joy. Food and proper care soon restored to Koma her beauty, and presently she and Gon were married, and they still live happily with the princess in the splendid palace.

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

WHEN good King Arthur reigned in England long, long ago there was a farmer of the county of Cornwall who had a son named Jack. The boy was quick-witted and he was very strong, and nobody could get the best of him.

In those days a huge giant lived on a small island near the coast. His name was Cormoran, and he was eighteen feet in height and three yards round the waist. His countenance was fierce and grim, and he was the terror of all the neighboring towns and villages; for as often as he wanted food he waded over to the mainland and helped himself to whatever came in his way. The people at his approach would run out of their houses and hide themselves, leaving him unhindered to seize as many of their cattle as he chose. He made nothing of carrying half a dozen oxen on his back at a time, and he often tied a score or more of sheep and pigs to his belt and walked off with them. This sort of

thing he had done for many years, so that all Cornwall was in despair.

One day Jack happened to be present at a public meeting called to consider what could be done to get



rid of the robber giant, and the lad asked the magistrates in charge of the meeting what reward would be given to the person who destroyed Cormoran.

"The giant's treasure will be the reward," they replied.

"Then I shall undertake to make an end of him," said Jack.

So that evening he put a shovel, a pickaxe, and a horn into a little rowboat and crossed over to the giant's island. There he set to work, not far from the cave in which the giant lived, digging a huge pit, and before morning he had a hole more than twenty feet deep and nearly that many feet broad. He covered it with long sticks, which he overlaid with leafy twigs, and lastly he strewed on earth, so that the spot appeared like plain ground. Just at break of day he stationed himself on the side of the pit farthest from the giant's lodging and blew his horn, "Toot-toot-toot — toot-toot!"

The noise roused the giant, who looked out from his cave, and seeing Jack, shouted, "You young rascal, why do you disturb my rest?"

Jack's only reply was to blow his horn again, "Toot-toot-toot — toot-toot!"

"Ah!" cried the giant, "you shall be well punished for your horn-blowing. I am going to eat you for my breakfast!" and he came running toward Jack and was just stretching out his hand to grasp him when he stepped on the brush and sticks that hid the pit, and down he went with such a crash that his neck was broken.

"We shall never have any more trouble from him," said Jack; "and now I'll see what sort of a reward I am to have."

So he went and searched the cave and found as much treasure as he could carry back in his boat.

When the magistrates heard of what Jack had done they made a proclamation that he should henceforth be called

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

and presented him with a sword and a belt; and on the belt was embroidered in letters of gold these words:

Here's Jack the valiant Cornish man
Who slew the giant Cormoran.

The news of Jack's victory spread over all the west of England, so that another giant named Blunderbore heard of it and vowed to be revenged on the lad. A few months later Jack was on a journey that took him into the vicinity of Blunderbore's domain, and on the borders of a lonesome wood he lay down beside a cool spring to rest and fell asleep. But in the midst of the lonesome wood the giant had his castle, and pretty soon he came to the spring for water. There lay Jack asleep, and the giant knew who he was by the lines embroidered on

his belt. So he picked him up and carried him off through the lonesome wood to his castle.

Jack was very much frightened to find himself in



the giant's clutches, and he was still more alarmed when they arrived at the castle and he saw that the courtyard was strewn with human bones. Blunderbore locked his captive in an upper chamber and left him there. After a time Jack heard women's voices crying in the next room, and then there was a rapping on the wall and one of the voices said,

“Do what you can to get away,
Or you 'll become the giant's prey;
He's gone to fetch his brother, who
Will help him kill and feast on you.”

Jack rapped on the wall in reply and said, “I do not know who you are, but I thank you for your kindness and hope I may find some way to repay it.”

“Now,” said he to himself, “I must lose no time in seeing what can be done.”

The apartment which he was in seemed to be perfectly empty of furniture and any other articles, but on examining it closely he discovered in a dark corner a coil of stout cord. “This may help me to get away,” he said; but when he opened a window, intending to slide down on the cord to the ground, he saw the giants coming.

“Too late!” said he. “Well, I'll try another trick.”

The entrance to the castle was directly below Jack's window, and he hastily made nooses in the ends of the cord, and while the giants were unlocking the iron gate he dropped a noose over each of their heads. Then he pulled the giants up off the ground and fastened the cord, and that was the end of both of them.

Jack climbed down the cord and took Blunderbore's keys and went into the castle to seek for the room whence he had heard the voices. In it were three fair ladies who had been held prisoners and were almost starved to death.

"Sweet ladies," said Jack, "you have no more to fear from Blunderbore or his brother. This castle and everything it contains is now yours," and he gave them the keys.

Then he returned to the giants, and after dragging their bodies to a ditch and burying them, he continued his journey. But he lost his road late in the day and went many miles without finding any habitation. It had grown so dark he could hardly see, when he entered a narrow valley and got into a path that led him to a big, rough house. He knocked at the door and forth came a monstrous giant with two heads. Jack wished himself elsewhere, but he put on a bold front and said, "I am



lost, Sir Giant, and I pray you will give me shelter for the night."

The giant appeared to be friendly, and he let Jack come in, and gave him something to eat, and then showed him to a room where there was a

comfortable bed, though it was a good deal too large. Jack lay down, but he did not feel at all safe under the giant's roof, and he continued wide awake and listening. The giant was moving about in an adjoining apartment and muttering something over and over. At length Jack made out that he was saying,

“ Though here you lodge with me to-night,
You shall not see the morning light.”

“ Ah !” thought Jack, “ he means me harm, does he ? ”

Then he got up. Beside the fireplace was a pile of wood. Jack groped his way to it and took one of the largest sticks and put it in the bed. That done he hid himself in a corner of the room. About twelve o'clock the giant came creeping in and struck several heavy blows on the bed with his club. “ I must have broken every bone in the fellow's body,” said he as he went out.

He left his club on the floor, and Jack picked it up and put it where it would be handy. Then after taking the stick of wood from the bed and returning it to the fireplace, he lay down and went to sleep. In the morning Jack was up early waiting for the giant to come and look for him, which he soon did.

"What! is that you?" cried the giant in surprise.

"Why of course!" replied Jack. "Who else should it be?"

"And how did you rest?" the giant inquired. "Did you feel anything in the night?"

"No," responded Jack, "nothing but a rat which ran over me and gave me two or three slaps with its tail."

"A rat, did you say?" asked the giant.

"Yes," said Jack.

"And you felt nothing heavier than two or three slaps of its tail?" said the giant.

"That was all," answered Jack, "and I'm wondering where the rat went to. Like enough it has a hole under the bed. I wish you would look under and see."

So the giant stooped down on his hands and knees to look, and Jack caught up the giant's club and gave him two such cracks, one for each head, that he never got up again.

A few days after this adventure Jack arrived late one evening at another giant's castle. It was in a lonely region, and as the giant had no near neighbors, Jack saw that he must either get shelter at this castle or sleep in the open air. So he walked up to the front door and rapped.

"Who is there?" roared the giant.

"You may call me your Cousin Jack," was the lad's reply.

"Well, Cousin Jack, what do you want?" asked the giant.

"I want lodging for the night," said Jack.

Then the giant let him in and put some food on the table for him. After Jack had eaten, the two sat down by the fireside, and the giant asked Jack to tell him the news.

Jack thought he would be more secure if he could frighten his host a little, and in answer to the giant's question he said, "How would you feel if you knew the king was coming with two thousand men to kill you and destroy your castle?"

"What!" exclaimed the giant, jumping to his feet in alarm. "Two thousand men did you say! I can fight five hundred men easily enough, but not two thousand. I will hide in my cellar, and do you, Cousin Jack, lock me in and keep the key until morning."

So Jack locked the giant in the cellar and then lay down on the giant's bed and rested comfortably all night. In the morning he released the giant, who, after climbing the loftiest tower of his castle and looking north, south, east, and west without

discovering any army, was somewhat relieved of his fears. The giant was, however, grateful to Jack for the protection he had afforded him, and when the lad was departing he presented him with a purse of gold.

Jack resumed his travels, and not long afterward fell in with the only son of King Arthur. The prince was going to pay court to a beautiful lady in Wales, and he was riding on one horse and leading a second one laden with baggage; but when he met Jack he took half the baggage on his own horse and had Jack mount the other, and they went on together. After a time they came to a town where they found a crowd of people gathered about a poor man and threatening him because he could not pay them various sums of money that were their due.

The prince pushed into the midst of the crowd and spoke with the persecuted man. "I have nothing with which to satisfy them," said the man, "and they will kill me."

Then the prince turned on the crowd and cried, "Let him alone, I will not see him harmed. Come with me, all you whom he owes, and you shall be paid."

So he sought an inn, and the rabble followed, and by the time he was through with the last of

them his money and Jack's too was all gone except threepence. Now Jack and the prince set off again, but as they were leaving the town an old woman called after them, saying, "That man had owed me threepence these seven years; pray pay me as you did the rest."

They gave the woman the threepence and went on over the hills and mountains until the sun hung low in the west. "Jack," said the prince, "since we have no money, where can we lodge this night?"

"Master," replied Jack, "I have heard that not two miles from where we now are lives a giant in an enchanted castle, and on the castle door hangs a great golden trumpet, and if any man can succeed in blowing that trumpet the castle doors will fly open and the giant's power will be ended. Many knights have tried to break the enchantment, but they had not strength to blow the trumpet and they have all perished."

"Alas!" said the prince, "then I fear it would be foolish for us to go any nearer that fatal place."

"But I think I can blow any trumpet that ever was made," declared Jack; "so if fortune favors us we will lodge to-night in the giant's castle."

They kept on and the castle was soon close at hand; and no one was on guard, for the giant

thought his enchanted dwelling was perfectly safe from all assailants. On the gate was the golden trumpet hung by a silver chain, and under it was a placard on which was engraved these lines:

Whenever by man this great trumpet is blown
The giant, its owner, will be overthrown;
But whoever fails in the task, let him know,
He never alive from this castle shall go.

Jack read, and then without hesitation drew a full breath, put the trumpet to his lips, and blew a blast that waked the echoes for ten miles around. The castle itself trembled to its foundations, the doors swung open, and the giant turned into a great owl and flew away to the forest.

"Well done!" cried the prince, and he and Jack took possession of the castle, and there they remained for some time. They found plenty of treasure, but best of all Jack discovered a magic coat that made its wearer invisible, and a cap that gave the person who had it on knowledge of all that he wished to know, and a pair of shoes that enabled whoever wore them to travel with extraordinary swiftness. By means of the cap Jack presently learned that a giant named Gloggan had vowed he was going to visit Jack and the prince at their castle very soon. He boasted that he would take dinner with them

and they would be the dinner and he would do the eating.

"If that is the way he feels," said Jack, "we shall have to make ready for him."

The castle was surrounded by a moat thirty feet deep and twenty feet wide, and this moat was spanned by a stout drawbridge. Jack went to work and sawed into the drawbridge from either side nearly to the middle, and so weakened it that any weight beyond two or three hundred pounds would break it down. The day after this job was done the giant was seen approaching, and Jack marched forth to meet him. Suddenly the giant stopped and began to sniff the air. "Fee, fi, fo, fum!" he exclaimed, "I smell a man!" and he looked all about.

"Here I am," shouted Jack, but he had on his magic coat and was invisible.

"Are you the villain who has been destroying us giants?" cried Gloggan, brandishing his club. "If you are I will grind your bones to powder."

"You will have to catch me first," Jack responded. Then he threw off his magic coat, that the giant might see him, and ran with all speed toward the castle. He had no fear that he would be overtaken, for he was wearing his shoes of swiftness, and he easily escaped across the drawbridge.

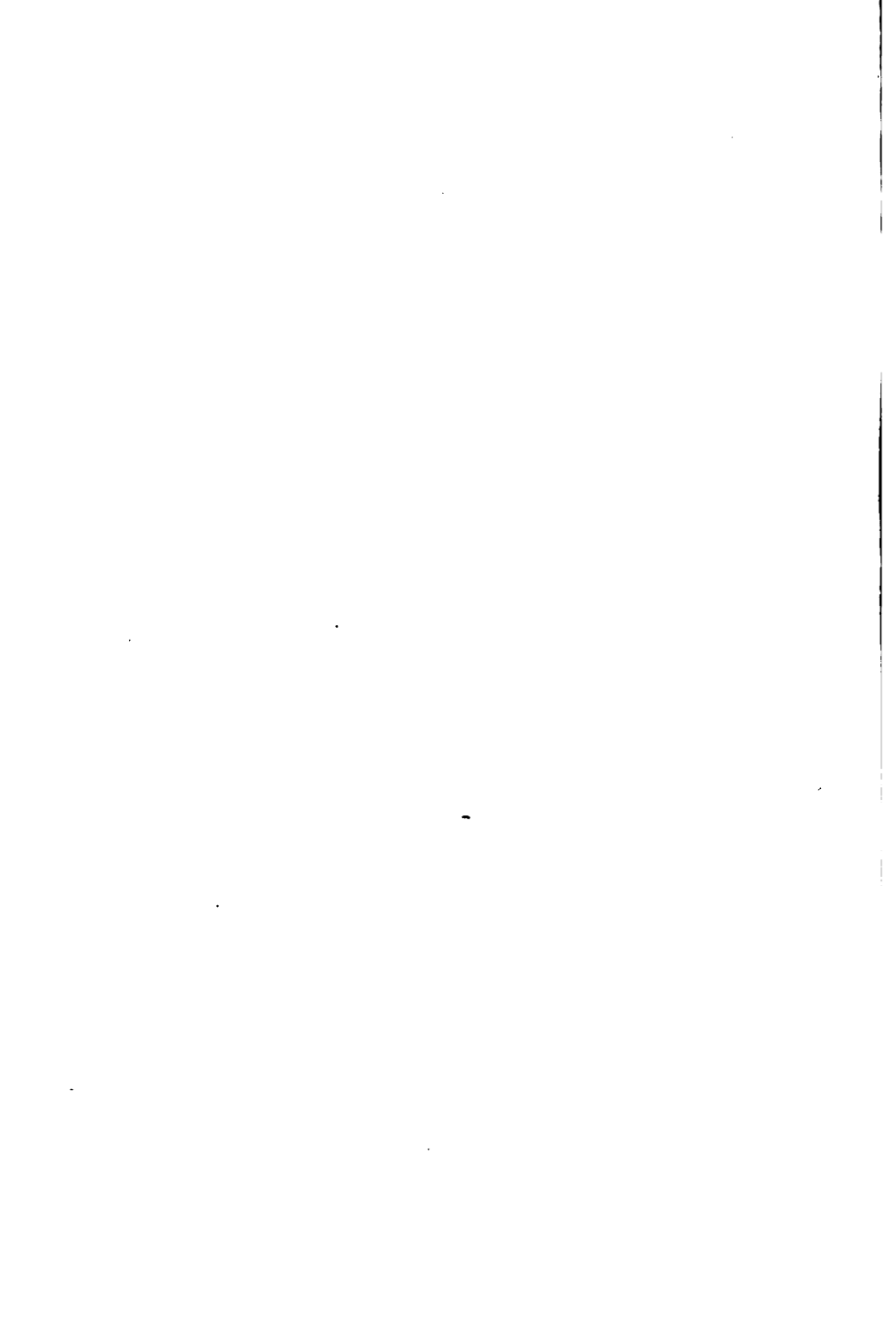
The giant had followed with steps that made the earth shake, but when he set foot on the bridge it gave way and he fell with a tremendous splash into the water, and as he did not know how to swim he was drowned.

A week or two later Jack and the prince left the castle and journeyed to the home of the beautiful Welsh lady whom the prince wished to marry. They were made very welcome, and presently a splendid banquet was prepared in their honor. While the repast was being served the lady held up her handkerchief for the prince to see, and said, "I have a task for you. Show me this handkerchief to-morrow morning and I will marry you. If you are not clever enough to do that you can go your way, for I shall never accept you."

But she carried the handkerchief with her, and the prince was greatly distressed and thought he must surely fail. He told Jack how things were, and Jack put on his cap of knowledge and learned that the lady had given the handkerchief to a serving-man and told him to mount a swift horse and start at once for a distant town where he was to leave the handkerchief in the hollow of an old yew tree in a churchyard. Then Jack put on his magic coat and shoes and he followed the man on

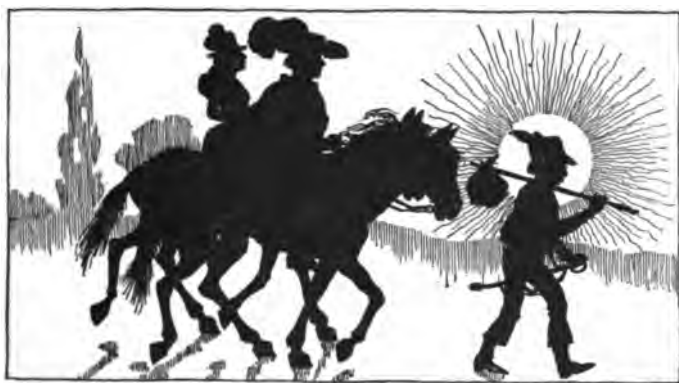


Gloggan chases Jack across the drawbridge



horseback for hour after hour until he reached the distant town ; and no sooner had the man turned his back after thrusting the handkerchief into the hollow yew than Jack pulled it out, and before daylight he had taken it back to the prince.

In the morning the prince showed the handkerchief to the lady and she married him and shortly



afterward they returned, accompanied by Jack, to the court of King Arthur. The king was rejoiced to see them, and he rewarded Jack for his many great exploits by making him one of the Knights of the Round Table.

THE KING OF THE MINERAL KINGDOM

ONCE upon a time there lived a widow who had a very pretty daughter. The widow was poor, but she had enough to eat and to wear and owned a comfortable cottage. She was quite content with her station in life, but her daughter was not. This daughter's mind was full of proud and ambitious thoughts, and she refused to marry any of the many admirers who came to seek her hand.

One night the mother awoke and began to think of her daughter and to pray for her happiness. She was unable to go to sleep and presently she arose, lit a candle, and went to her daughter's bedside. As she looked down on the beautiful girl she saw her smile, and wondered what happy dream had visited her. Then she returned to bed and slept, but the next day she said to the girl, "Tell me, my darling child, what you dreamed last night."

"I dreamed that a rich merchant came to our house in a splendid carriage of brass," the girl

replied, "and he gave me a ring set with stones that sparkled like the stars of heaven."

So saying, the daughter ran away singing and busied herself about the house. That same day a handsome young farmer drove into the village in his cart and begged the mother and daughter to come and share his home with him. He was a kind and prosperous fellow, and the mother liked him so well that she urged the girl to accept him for her husband.

But the daughter had a fancy that her dream might come true, and she would have nothing to do with him because he was a mere peasant. The young man therefore returned sadly home, while the mother reproached and scolded her daughter for her folly.

The next night the mother again awoke, and again she prayed for her daughter's happiness. While she did so she heard the girl laugh lightly in her sleep. When morning came she said to the maiden, "My dear, I awoke in the night and heard you laugh. Were you dreaming?"

"Yes," the girl replied. "I thought a nobleman came for me in a silver carriage and gave me a costly diadem."

That same day a rich merchant drove into the village in his carriage and invited the mother and daughter to come and share his home with him.

The mother considered such an offer a great honor, but the girl remembered her dream and said she would not consent to be the wife of an ordinary merchant. So the gentleman returned home in disgust, and the mother rebuked her daughter severely for her pride.

The third night the mother once more awoke, and while she lay thinking sorrowfully of her daughter's foolish arrogance, she heard the girl laugh loud and long. "Ah me!" exclaimed the woman, "what are these dreams that worry her poor brain?"

When she questioned her daughter in the morning the maiden said, "I dreamed a king drove up to our door in a golden carriage and asked me to marry him, and he brought me a mantle of cloth-of-gold."

That same day three carriages entered the yard, one of brass, one of silver, and one of gold. The first was drawn by two, the second by four, the third by six magnificent horses. Gentlemen wearing scarlet gloves and green cloaks got out of the brass and silver carriages, while from the golden carriage alighted a king, and as the sun shone on him he seemed to be all dressed in gold. They rapped at the widow's door, and the king asked her if he might marry her daughter.

"I fear we are not worthy of so much honor," replied the widow, meekly. "Will you come in? Then you can talk with the girl herself, but I warn you beforehand that she has a mind of her own."

However, when the girl's eyes fell on her suitor she recognized in him the royal lover of her dreams and she promptly accepted him. He put on her



finger a ring set with stones that shone like the stars of heaven, and on her head he placed a costly diadem, and adjusted over her shoulders a mantle of cloth-of-gold.

Then the king sent a servant for the local clergyman, and he came and married them. The girl looked very fine in her bridal attire, and she was so overjoyed at this sudden glory that she left home without thinking to say good-bye to her mother. They drove away in the golden carriage, followed by the other two carriages, and went on out of the village and along the road until they came to a high rock. Here was the entrance to a large cavern, and into this cavern trotted the horses, drawing the wedding party, without a pause. Then the opening closed behind them, and they went down a steep slope, lower and lower, in darkness that was only illumined by grotesque dwarfs carrying lighted torches. The dwarfs appeared on all sides saluting and welcoming the king, and the bride was much terrified, but her husband reassured her.

"Fear nothing," said he. "In a little while we shall come into the sunshine and all will be beautiful."

It happened as he had said. On emerging from the gloomy underground passage they found themselves surrounded by large forests growing on mountains that loomed up till they seemed to touch

the sky. Strange to relate, the trees and mountains were all of solid lead.

At length they came to a golden palace covered with precious stones. The bride was weary with looking at so many wonders and gladly sat down to a feast prepared by the dwarfs. Meats of many kinds were served, roast and boiled, but lo! they were of metal — brass, silver, and gold. Everyone ate heartily and enjoyed the food, except the young bride. With tears in her eyes she begged for a piece of bread.

"Certainly, madam," answered the king.

But she could not eat the bread which was brought, for it was of brass. Then the king sent for a piece of silver bread. Neither could she eat that. Lastly he ordered a slice of golden bread, but she could not bite it any better than she could the brass or the silver. The servants did all they could to provide something to their mistress's taste, yet she found it impossible to eat any of the food they set before her. She had married the king of the mineral kingdom, and she realized now that her pride had led her into a dreadful mistake. There was no way of escape, and she wept bitterly.

"Don't trouble yourself," said the king. "You

150 THE KING OF THE MINERAL KINGDOM

see this food agrees with us, and you, too, will get used to it in time. Then everything will be all right."

But whether that was so or not, she could only stay where she was, and her mother and her home village saw her no more.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

IT was beautiful in the country, for it was summer time, and the wheat was yellow and the hay stood in stacks on the green meadows. The sunshine fell warmly on an old mansion surrounded by a deep moat. Between the walls of the mansion and the water's edge grew many burdocks, and they were so high that the children could stand among them and not be seen. In the midst of these burdocks it was as wild as in the thickest wood, and on that account a duck had chosen to make her nest there. She was sitting on her eggs, but the pleasure she felt at first was now almost gone, because she had been there so long and had so few visitors. She seldom saw anything of the other ducks, for they preferred swimming on the moat to gossiping with her under the burdock leaves.

At last the eggs cracked one after another and the little ducklings stepped forth. "Quack, quack," said the old duck, and they all stood up as well as

they could and peeped out under the burdock leaves. As green is good for the eyes, their mother let them look as long as they pleased.

"How large the world is!" said the little ones, for of course it seemed large to them, they had so much more room now than in the eggs.

"Do you imagine this is the whole world?" said the mother. "Oh no, the world extends far beyond what you see. It goes on and on, clear into the parson's field. Are you all here?"

She got up to find out, whereby, in spite of all her care, there was a great overthrow and confusion among the little ones. "No," she said, sighing, "the largest of the eggs is not yet broken. How long will this last, I wonder? I'm getting tired of it."

She however mastered all her patience and sat down again.

"Well, and how are you getting on?" asked an old duck who happened along at the moment.

"With one of the eggs there seems to be no end of trouble," the tired mother complained. "The shell must be too thick so that the poor little duckling inside cannot break through. But you must see the rest of the children. They are just as pretty as any mother could wish them to be, and

what an extraordinary resemblance they have to their father, who is certainly the handsomest drake in the whole flock."

"I would not spend any more time with the egg that has not broken," said the old duck. "Take my advice and leave it. You ought to be teaching your little ones to swim."

"I will sit on it a little longer," said the mother duck, shaking her head. "I have been sitting so long already that a day or two more will not matter."

"Oh, if you like it, I have no objection," the old one answered; and with a stiff courtesy she took her leave.

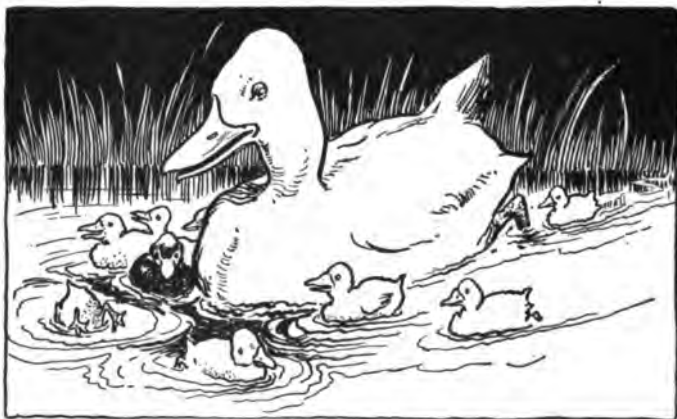
The shell of the great egg at last broke. "Tweet, tweet!" cried the tardy comer, and out it tumbled.

But, oh! how large and ugly it was! The duck looked at it. "That is a great strong creature even if it is homely," she said, "and no doubt it will do very well."

The next day, as soon as the sun had risen and was shining warmly on the green burdock leaves, the mother duck with all her family waddled down to the moat. Plump she went into the water. "Quack! quack!" she cried, and one duckling after another followed her. The water closed over their

heads, but they immediately came to the top and swam most beautifully, and the ugly, gray late-comer paddled around as merrily as any of them.

“Only see how prettily he moves his legs,” said the mother duck. “How upright he holds



himself! He is good-looking enough, after all. Quack! quack! Now, children, come with me. I want to take you into society. I am going to introduce you in the poultry yard. Keep close to me, or someone may tread on you; and I warn you to beware of the cat.”

They reached the yard, and the mother duck said, “When we pass that old duck you see yonder, I want you all to bow. She is the most distinguished of any of the fowls present. Look, she

has a red rag on her leg. That is considered extremely handsome, and is the greatest distinction a duck can have. It is as much as to say that the people of the mansion don't want her to get lost. They put that on her so she will be recognized everywhere. Come along, my children, and make haste! But for goodness' sake! don't turn your feet in so! A well-bred duckling must walk just like papa and mama. Imitate me in all things, and pay attention to my commands. When you bow, do not neglect to bend your neck gracefully and then boldly say, 'Quack! quack!' Nothing more."

They did as they were told, but the other ducks who were in the yard looked at them with contempt and said, quite loud, "Only see, now we have another brood, as if there were not enough of us already; and fie! how ugly that big one is. We will not endure him," and immediately one of the ducks flew at him and bit him in the neck.

"Leave him alone," said the mother. "He is doing no one any harm."

"Yes, but he is so large and so strange-looking," said the others.

"Those are fine children that the mother has," said the old duck with the red rag on her leg, "and

they are all pretty except one. It is a pity that one can't be hatched again."

"He certainly is not handsome," said the mother, "but he is a very good child and swims as well as any of them. I think he will grow like the others in time and perhaps will look smaller. I suppose the difference is caused by his staying so long in the eggshell."

While she spoke she did her best to smooth down the youngster's gray-green uniform where it had been ruffled. "Besides," added she, "he is a drake. I think he will be very strong, and therefore looks do not matter so much. I have an idea he will make his way."

"The rest of the little ones are charming," said the old duck with the red cloth round her leg. "Now make yourselves at home, and whenever one of you ducklings happens to find anything particularly nice to eat you may bring it to me without hesitation."

So they took up their abode in the poultry yard, but the duckling who had come last out of the eggshell, and who was so ugly, was bitten, jostled, and teased by both ducks and hens. "He is much too big," said they all, and the turkey-cock, who fancied he was an emperor, puffed himself up like

a ship in full sail and bore down on the duckling gobbling and getting quite red in the face.

The poor duckling did not know what to say or where to go, and he was greatly distressed to be so ugly and the jest of the whole poultry yard. As



time passed on matters grew worse and worse. The gray-green duckling was scorned by all. Even his own brothers and sisters behaved unkindly.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

The ducks bit him, the hens pecked him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him. At length his fear and despair so increased that he determined to run away. Off he went as fast as his weak legs and wings would carry him, and with a great effort he got through the hedge that surrounded the poultry yard. The little singing birds in the bushes flew up in a fright. "That is because I am so ugly," thought the duckling, and he ran on till at last he came to a wide moor where lived some wild ducks.

Here he lay all night, tired and comfortless. The full moon was shining in the sky and its friendly countenance seemed to be laughing at the foolish frogs which kept jumping from the water onto the grass and then back into the water.

Early the next morning the wild ducks, aroused by the first glimmer of the sun, rose from the reedy pools to take a turn in the warm summer air. With surprise they saw the stranger. "What funny guy is this?" they exclaimed. "Where can he have come from?"

The duckling, with all possible politeness, turned from side to side, first bowing to the right and then to the left. "You are really uncommonly ugly," said the wild ducks.

However, as all he wished for was to remain undisturbed among the rushes and drink a little of the water of the swamp, they readily granted him the favor of staying.

There he lay several days till one morning, Bang! went a gun, and a wild duck fell dead among the reeds. Bang! another gun was fired. Whole flocks of wild ducks flew up from the marshy waters, and a third gun was heard. A grand hunting party had come to the moor for a day's sport. The hunters lay in ambush all around, and some were sitting in the trees whose branches stretched far over the water. The blue smoke rose like a mist, and there was a smell of burning powder in the air. The dogs splashed about in the mud, and the reeds and rushes bent in all directions. How frightened the poor duckling was! Once a dog came close to him, his tongue hanging out and his eyes gleaming. He opened wide his jaws at the sight of the duckling, showed his sharp white teeth, and splash, splash! he was gone.

"Well, let me be thankful!" sighed the outcast. "I am so ugly that even the dogs will not touch me."

The shooting continued till late in the day, and then the duckling hastened away from the moor as

fast as he could. A boisterous wind was blowing and had no consideration for the scantily clad traveller. It impeded his progress and exhausted his strength.



After a time the fugitive reached a miserable cottage, and with no small delight discovered that its rickety door had broken loose from the lower

hinge so that there was a slanting crevice through which he could slip into the kitchen. He entered without delay.

The cottage was the home of an old woman who lived there with her tomcat and her hen. The cat was a perfect expert in purring, and he could turn head over heels so cleverly that no one in the neighborhood could equal him. Then, too, one only needed to rub his hair repeatedly the wrong way to bring bright sparks from his back. The hen had very short legs and was therefore called "Chicky Shortlegs." She laid excellent eggs, and the old woman loved her as her own child.

The next morning the uninvited guest was discovered, and the cat began to mew and the hen to cackle.

"What is the matter?" asked the old woman, looking round.

Then she saw the intruder, but her eyes were not good, and she mistook it for a fat duck that by some chance had wandered into her cottage. "Here is an unusual piece of good fortune!" she exclaimed in joyous surprise. "Now I shall have duck's eggs — that is if the stupid thing should not prove to be a drake. At any rate, we will give it a trial."

So the gray-green youngster remained on trial for three weeks, but no eggs made their appearance.

The cat was the master of the house, and Chicky Shortlegs was the mistress, and they imagined themselves to be not only half the world, but by far the better half. The duckling thought it was possible to be of a different opinion, but that the hen would not allow.

"Can you lay eggs?" asked she.

"No."

"Well, then, hold your tongue."

And the cat said, "Can you arch your back? Can you purr?"

"No."

"That settles it," declared the cat. "You have no right to offer an opinion when reasonable people talk."

So the duckling sat alone in a corner, quite melancholy. He thought of the fresh air and the bright sunshine out of doors, and these thoughts gave him such a strong desire to swim again that he could not help telling the hen of his longing.

"What ails you?" said the hen. "You have nothing to do, and it is sheer idleness that torments you and puts such foolish fancies into your head. Lay eggs or purr, and you will be all right."

"But it is so delightful to swim," the duckling answered; "and it is so delightful when the waters close over your head and you plunge to the bottom."

"Well, that is a queer sort of pleasure," remarked the hen. "I think you must be crazy. The cat is the most sensible animal I know; ask him whether he would like to swim, or to plunge to the bottom of the water. Ask our mistress, the old woman. There is no one in the world wiser than she. Do you think she would take pleasure in swimming and in having the waters close over her head?"

"You do not understand me," the duckling sighed.

"What! we do not understand you!" exclaimed the hen. "So you think yourself wiser than the cat and the old woman, not to speak of myself. Don't get silly things into your head, child, but be thankful for all the kindness that has been shown you. Are you not lodged in a warm room, and have you not the advantage of society from which you can learn something? But you are a simpleton, and it is wearisome to have anything to do with you. Believe me, I wish you well. I tell you unpleasant truths, but it is thus that real friendship

is shown. Come, do give yourself the trouble to learn to purr, or to lay eggs."

"I think I will go out into the wide world again," said the duckling.

"Well, go," responded Chicky Shortlegs, sharply.

So the duckling went, and he hurried on till he found the longed-for water. He swam about joyously and boldly dived right down to the bottom.

Autumn came. The leaves turned yellow and brown, and the wind caught them and danced them about. The air was very cold, the clouds were heavy with sleet and snow, and the crows sat on the hedges and croaked. The poor duckling was certainly not very comfortable.

One evening, just as the sun was setting with unusual brilliance, a flock of large handsome birds rose out of the brushwood. The duckling had never seen any birds so beautiful before. Their plumage was of a dazzling white, they had long, slender necks, and they spread out their broad splendid wings and flew away from the cold northern region to warm countries southward. They flew high, very high, and the ugly duckling turned round and round like a top and stretching out his neck after the departing birds gave a cry so loud and shrill that he was frightened at it himself.

When they quite disappeared from sight he was greatly distressed. Ah! he could not forget those noble birds! those happy birds! He knew not what they were called, knew not whither they were flying, yet he loved them as he had never before loved anything. He did not envy them, for how could it enter his head to wish for such beauty himself? He would have been quite contented if the ducks in the poultry yard had but endured his company.

The weather grew bitterly cold. It was winter, and the duckling was obliged to swim round and round in the water to keep it from freezing; but every night the opening in which he swam became smaller. At last, exhausted by constant exertion, he was frozen tight into the ice.

Presently, a peasant came that way and, seeing the poor bird in so wretched a plight, he broke the ice around it with his wooden shoe, and brought the duckling home to his wife. She took the half-frozen creature into the warm kitchen where he soon recovered animation and strength. The children tried to play with him, but the duckling thought they wished to tease him, and in his terror he jumped into a pail of milk so that the milk was spilled about the room.

The housewife screamed and clapped her hands, which thoroughly bewildered the duckling and he flew into the pan where the butter was kept, and thence into the meal barrel and out again. Oh, what a figure he was now ! Bewailing her losses, the woman pursued him with the tongs, and the



children, laughing and shouting, rolled over each other as they tried to catch him.

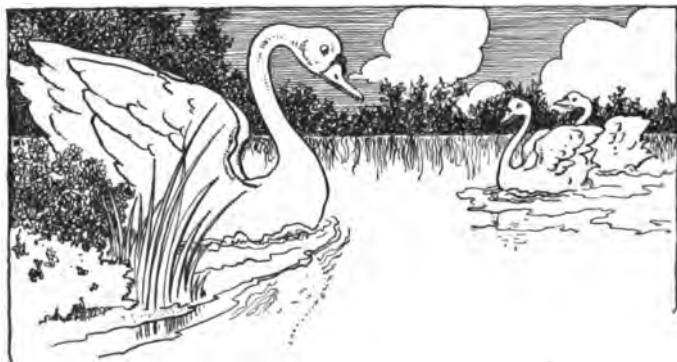
Fortunately for the duckling, the door was open, and taking advantage of the general confusion, he rushed out into the open air, and with difficulty fluttered to some bushes not far off. There he sank down into the deep snow.

It would be too painful to follow him through all his misfortunes, and to witness the misery and privation he suffered during that severe winter.

We will therefore only say that in some way he contrived to live, and that he was lying on a moor among the reeds when the returning sun began to shine warmly again. In time the larks were singing and beautiful spring had arrived. Once more the outcast shook his wings. They were stronger than formerly, and when he tried a flight through the air they bore him swiftly forward. Before he was aware of it he was in a large garden where the apple-trees stood in full bloom, and where the syringas sent forth their fragrance, and the willows hung their long green branches down into a winding stream.

A short distance before him two beautiful white swans came sailing along the water from behind some bushes. The poor outcast recognized the magnificent birds to be of the same sort as those he had seen going away southward the previous autumn, and a feeling of deep sadness came over him. "I will fly to them," said he, "and they will kill me, because ugly as I am, I have presumed to approach them. But it matters not. Better to be killed by them than to be bitten by the ducks, picked by the hens, kicked by the girl who feeds the poultry, and to have to suffer so much during the winter."

He flew into the water and swam toward the beautiful creatures. They saw him and shot forward to meet him. "You may kill me if you will," said he, and he bowed his head low, expecting death. But what did he see in the water? There, beneath him, was reflected his own form, no longer that of



an ugly gray bird—it was that of a swan. Then he knew that the big egg from which he had been hatched, and which he had heard the ducks in the poultry yard talk about, was a swan's egg.

The other swans gave him a friendly welcome and stroked him with their beaks. Some little children were running about the garden. They threw grain and bread into the water, and the youngest pointed to the swans and exclaimed, "There is a new one!"

"Yes," said the rest of the children, "a new swan has come!" and they clapped their hands and danced around shouting with delight, and then they ran off to call their father and mother.

The older members of the family soon came, and everyone said, "The new one is the best, it is so beautiful!"

The young swan felt quite ashamed and hid his head under his wing. He scarcely knew what to do. The willows bent down their branches toward him low into the water, and the sun shone warm and bright. He shook his feathers, stretched his slender neck, and in the joy of his heart said, "How little did I dream of so much happiness when I was the ugly, despised duckling!"

THE SON OF THE THUNDER GOD

AT the foot of a lofty mountain there lived a peasant named Bimbo. He and his wife had no children and longed to adopt a son, but they hesitated to assume the responsibility ; for they were very poor and the scanty crops they gathered from their little strip of mountain land barely served to supply their own simple wants.

Bimbo worked with unceasing patience from cock-crow until the barking of the foxes warned him that night had fallen. He laid out his plot of ground in terraces which he surrounded with dams, and he diverted the course of a mountain stream that it might water his fields. But do what he would the harvests were very meagre, and often, as he sat in his hut with his wife, after a long day of hard work, he would speak sadly of their troubles.

An evil time came at length when the land was parched throughout all the region. No rain fell. The streams dried up and the growing plants

withered. Bimbo sighed heavily over his work. He looked up to the clear blue sky many times every day and prayed for rain.

After weeks and weeks of uninterrupted sunshine there was a change in the weather. The clouds floated up rapidly from the west and gathered in angry masses. A strange silence filled the air. Even the insects which hitherto had been chirping loudly were stilled. Only the cry of the mountain hawk was heard. A murmur passed over valley and hill—a faint rustling of leaves, a whispering sigh in the pine needles. Lower and lower sank the clouds, and there were vivid streaks of lightning and a heavy rumbling of thunder. Now the rain arrived, at first in scattering drops, then in torrents.

Bimbo rejoiced and worked steadily to strengthen the dams and open the channels on his farm. While he worked there came such a bright flash of lightning and such a mighty roar of thunder that Bimbo fell on his knees, terrified and almost blinded. When he recovered somewhat and looked about he saw lying on the ground near him a little rosy boy, who held out his arms and lisped. Bimbo was greatly amazed, but his heart was glad and he took up the child, and sheltering him under his coat, hurried home to his hut. He called to

his wife and said, "Rejoice, heaven has sent us a child. We will call him Taro, the Son of the Thunder God, and bring him up as a child of our own."



The good woman fondly tended the boy, and Taro loved his foster-parents and grew up amiable and obedient. He did not care to play with other children, but was always happy to work with Bimbo in the fields. He liked to watch the flight of the birds and listen to the sound of the wind; and long

before Bimbo could discern any sign of an approaching storm, Taro knew it was at hand. When it drew near, he fixed his eyes intently on the gathering clouds, he hearkened eagerly to the roll of the thunder and to the rush of the rain, and he greeted each flash of lightning with a shout of joy.

Taro had come as a ray of sunshine into the lives of the poor peasants, and good fortune followed the farmer from the day that he carried the little boy home under his coat. The mountain stream was never dry, and the land produced abundant crops. Year by year he grew more successful until, instead of being called "Bimbo the Poor," he was known as "Bimbo the Prosperous."

About eighteen summers passed and Taro still lived with his foster-parents. Then, they knew not why, he became thoughtful and sad. Nothing would rouse him. Bimbo and his wife determined to attempt to divert him by holding a feast in honor of his birthday. They called together the neighbors, and there was much rejoicing. Bimbo told many tales of other days, and finally of how Taro came to him out of the storm.

As he ceased, a strange, far-off look was in the eyes of the Son of the Thunder God. He stood before his foster-parents and said, "You have loved

me well. You have been faithful and kind, but my home is in the skies and the time has come for me to leave you. Farewell."

In a moment Taro was gone. A white cloud floated upward from where he had stood, toward the highest mountain peak, and as it neared the summit it took the form of a dragon. Higher still it soared until, at last, it vanished into a castle of clouds.

The peasants looked wistfully up to the sky. They hoped that Taro would return, but he had joined his father the Thunder God, and was seen no more.

THE FORTY ROBBERS

THERE once lived in a town of Persia two brothers, one named Cassim and the other Ali Baba. They came of a poor family, but Cassim married a rich wife and became a wealthy merchant. Ali Baba, on the other hand, married a woman as poor as himself and lived by cutting wood and bringing it on three donkeys into the town to sell.

One day when Ali Baba was in the forest, and had just cut wood enough to load his donkeys, he saw at a distance a great cloud of dust approaching. He observed it attentively and soon distinguished a body of horsemen, whom he suspected might be robbers. So he determined to leave his donkeys, and after driving them into a thicket out of sight he climbed a large tree growing on a high rock. The branches of the tree were thick enough to conceal him, and yet enabled him to watch all that passed.

The horsemen numbered forty and were all well mounted and armed. They came to the foot of

the rock on which the tree stood and there dismounted. Every man unbridled his horse, tied it to a shrub, and gave it a feed of corn from a bag he had brought with him. Then each took on his shoulder his saddle-bags, which Ali Baba could see were stuffed full of plunder. One, who was apparently the captain, came under the tree in which Ali Baba was hidden, and making his way through some bushes pronounced these words: "Open sesame!"

At once a door opened in the rock, and after the robber captain had made all his troop enter, he followed, when the door closed of itself.

The robbers stayed some time within the rock, but at last the door opened and the captain came out and stood to see all his troop pass by him. As soon as the last man had passed out, the door closed and they went and bridled their horses and mounted. Then the captain put himself at their head, and they returned the way they had come.

After Ali Baba had followed them with his eyes as far as he could see them, he descended from the tree. Remembering the words the captain of the robbers used to cause the door to open, he had the curiosity to try if his repeating them would have the same effect. Accordingly he went among the



Ali Baba watches the approach of the robbers

bushes, found the door concealed behind them, and said, "Open sesame!"

The door instantly flew wide open. Ali Baba, who expected to see a dark, dismal cavern, was



surprised to find a spacious and well-furnished chamber admirably lighted from a strongly barred opening at the top of the rock. It contained many

rich bales of silk, brocade, and valuable carpeting, great heaps of gold and silver ingots, and no end of money in bags. Evidently the cave had been occupied for ages by robbers who had succeeded one another.

Ali Baba boldly collected as many bags of the gold coins as he thought his three donkeys could carry, and when he had put these on the animals' backs he laid wood on top in such a manner that the bags could not be seen.

He now made the best of his way to town and drove his donkeys into his little yard. After throwing off the wood that covered the panniers he carried the bags into the house and emptied them, which raised such a great heap of gold as dazzled his wife's eyes. Then he told her the whole adventure from beginning to end and recommended her to keep it secret.

The wife rejoiced greatly at their good fortune and wanted to count all the gold, piece by piece. "You would never get done," said Ali Baba. "There is no time to be lost. I will dig a hole and bury it."

"Very well," replied she, "but let us at least know somewhere near how much we have. I will borrow a measure and measure it while you dig the hole."

So away she ran to Cassim's house, and addressing herself to his wife, desired the loan of a measure for a little while. Her sister-in-law inquired whether she would have a small or a great measure, and she asked for a small one.

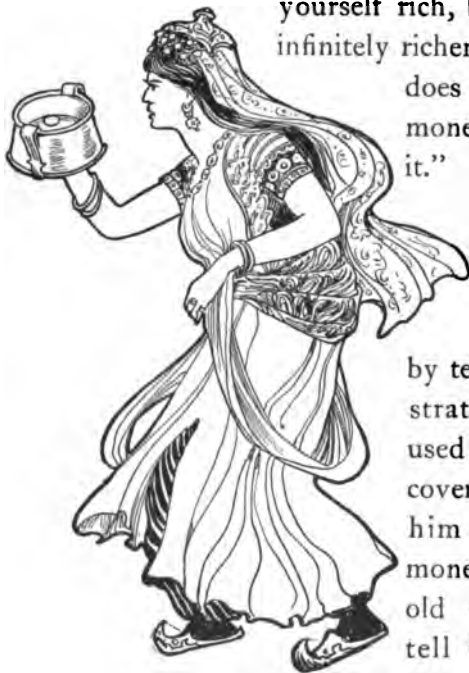
The sister-in-law knew Ali Baba's poverty, and she was curious to learn what his wife wanted to measure. So before bringing the measure out she put a little dab of tallow in the bottom with the expectation that a portion of whatever was measured would stick to the measure and be brought back when it was returned.

Ali Baba's wife went home, set the measure beside the heap of gold, and continued to fill and empty it till she had done. She was very well satisfied to find the number of measures amounted to so many as they did, as was also her husband, who had now finished digging the hole. While Ali Baba was burying the gold his wife carried the measure back, but without taking notice that a piece of gold had stuck to the tallow in the bottom. "Sister," said she, "you see I have not kept your measure long. I return it with thanks."

As soon as Ali Baba's wife was gone Cassim's wife looked into the measure and was surprised to find a piece of gold sticking there. "What!" she

exclaimed, "has Ali Baba gold so plentiful as to measure it? Whence has he all this wealth?"

When her husband came home from his warehouse she said to him, "Cassim, I know you think yourself rich, but Ali Baba is infinitely richer than you. He does not count his money, but measures it."



Cassim desired her to explain the riddle, which she did by telling him of the stratagem she had used to make the discovery, and showed him the piece of money, which was so old they could not tell in what ruler's reign it was coined.

Since he married the rich widow, Cassim had never treated Ali Baba as a brother, but neglected him; and now, instead of being pleased, he envied his brother's prosperity. He could not sleep all

that night and went to him in the morning before sunrise. "Ali Baba," said he, "you pretend to be miserably poor, and yet you measure gold."

Then he took from his pocket the old coin, and added, "My wife found this at the bottom of the measure you borrowed yesterday."

Ali Baba, perceiving that Cassim knew of the wealth he had discovered, confessed all and offered his brother part of the treasure to keep the secret.

"I must know exactly where this treasure is," replied Cassim, haughtily, "and how I may visit it myself when I choose. Otherwise I will go and inform against you, and then you will not only get no more, but will lose all you have, and I shall receive a share for my information."

Ali Baba told him all he wanted to know, even to the words he was to use to gain admission to the cave.

At daybreak the next morning Cassim set out for the forest with ten mules bearing great chests which he designed to fill with gold. He followed the road Ali Baba had described to him, and it was not long before he reached the rock with the tall tree growing on it, of which his brother had told him. He pushed through the bushes to the entrance of the cavern and pronounced the words, "Open sesame!"

The door immediately opened, and when he was in, closed on him. He quickly laid at the door of the cavern as many bags of gold as his ten mules could carry ; but his thoughts were now so full of the great riches he would possess that he could not think of the necessary word to make the door open. Instead of "Open sesame," he said, "Open barley !" and was much amazed to find that the door remained fast shut. He named several sorts of grain, but still the door would not open.

Cassim had never expected such an incident, and was so alarmed at the danger he was in that the more he endeavored to remember the word "sesame," the more his memory was confounded, and he had as much forgotten it as if he had never heard it mentioned. He threw down the bags he had loaded himself with and walked distractedly up and down the cave, without having the least regard to the riches that were around him.

About noon the robbers visited their cave. As they approached they saw Cassim's mules straggling about near the rock with great chests on their backs. Alarmed at this, they galloped full speed to the cave, and with their naked scimitars in their hands went directly to the door. Then the captain spoke the proper words and the door opened.



Cassim, who heard the noise of the horses' feet, at once guessed the arrival of the robbers and resolved to make an effort for his life. No sooner did he see the door open than he rushed out with such violence that he threw the robber captain down

on the ground. But he could not escape the other robbers, who, with their scimitars, cut off his head.

The first care of the robbers after this was to examine the cave. They found all the bags which Cassim had brought to the door, and carried them to their places, but they did not miss what Ali Baba had taken away before. Then they held a council and tried unsuccessfully to imagine how Cassim had learned the secret words by which alone he could enter. In order to terrify any accomplice who might also know the secret, they agreed to hang Cassim's head just within the door of the cave on one side and his body on the other. This they did, and then closing the place of their hoard they mounted their horses and went to beat the roads again and attack the caravans they might meet.

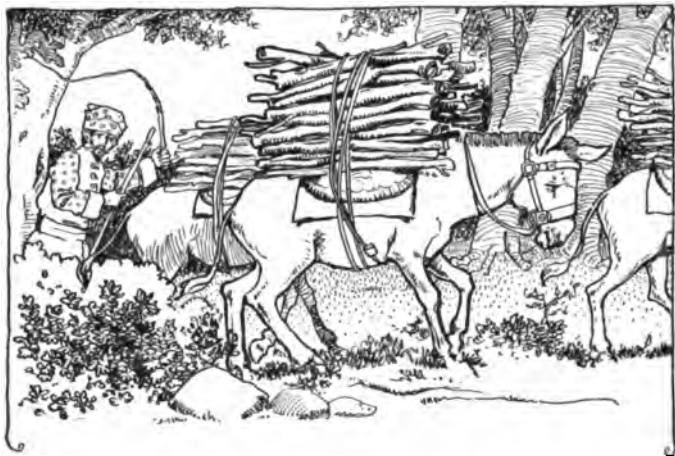
The day passed and Cassim's wife became very uneasy. She ran to Ali Baba in great alarm and said, "I believe, brother-in-law, that you know Cassim has gone to the forest and on what account. It is now night, and he has not come back. I am afraid some misfortune has happened to him."

Ali Baba told her that she need not frighten herself, for Cassim would certainly not think it best to come into the town till the night was pretty far advanced.

Cassim's wife, considering how much it concerned her husband to keep the business secret, was easily persuaded to believe her brother-in-law. She went home and waited patiently till midnight. Then her fear redoubled, and her grief was the harder to bear because she was forced to keep it to herself. She repented her foolish curiosity and cursed her desire to pry into the affairs of other people. After spending all the night in weeping, she went as soon as it was day to her brother-in-law and his wife, telling them by her tears the cause of her coming.

Ali Baba did not wait for her to ask him to go to see what had become of Cassim, but begging her to moderate her affliction, departed immediately with his three donkeys. When he came to the rock in the forest, having seen neither his brother nor the mules on the way, he was seriously alarmed at finding some blood near the door of the cave. On pronouncing the proper words the door opened and he was struck with horror at the dismal sight of his brother's body. He was not long in determining what to do, and he had soon carried the body to the panniers of one of his donkeys and covered it over with wood. The other two donkeys he loaded with bags of gold and piled wood on top so that the bags should not be seen. Then he came away, but stopped some time

at the edge of the forest that he might not go into the town before dark. Presently he reached home and drove the two donkeys loaded with gold into



his little yard and left them in care of his wife, while he led the other to his sister-in-law's house.

When he knocked at the door it was opened by Morgiana, an unusually clever and intelligent slave. He came into the court, unloaded the donkey, and taking Morgiana aside said, "You must observe close secrecy. I have brought your master's body. We must bury it as if he had died a natural death. Go now and tell your mistress. I leave the matter to your wit and skilful devices."

Ali Bāba helped to place the body in Cassim's house and then returned home with his donkey.

Morgiana went out early the next morning to a druggist and asked for a sort of medicine which was considered efficacious in the most dangerous disorders. The apothecary inquired who was ill. She replied with a sigh, "My good master Cassim, and he can neither eat nor speak."

In the evening Morgiana went to the same druggist again, and with tears in her eyes asked for an essence which was given to sick people only when at the last extremity. "Alas!" said she, taking it from the apothecary, "I am afraid that this remedy will have no better effect than what I got before, and that I shall lose my master."

Moreover, as Ali Baba and his wife were often seen going between Cassim's and their house all that day, and seemed melancholy, nobody was surprised in the evening to hear the shrieks and cries of Cassim's wife and of Morgiana, who gave word everywhere that Cassim was dead.

The next morning, at daybreak, Morgiana went to an old cobbler whom she knew to be always early at his stall, and bidding him good morrow, put a piece of gold in his hand, saying, "Mustapha, bring with you your sewing tackle and come with

me. But I must tell you I shall blindfold you when you arrive at a certain place."

Mustapha hesitated a little at these words. "Oh, oh!" replied he, "you would have me do something against my conscience."

"God forbid that I should ask anything contrary to your conscience!" said Morgiana, putting another

piece of gold into his hand. "Only come along with me and fear nothing."

Mustapha went with Morgiana, who, after she had arrived at the place she had mentioned, bound his eyes with a handkerchief and guided him to her deceased master's house, and she never unbound his eyes till he had entered the room where she had the body. "Mustapha," said



she, "you must make haste and sew the parts of this body together; and as soon as you have done I will give you another piece of gold."

When Mustapha had finished his task she gave him the money, blindfolded him again, and recommending secrecy to him, led him back to the place where she first bound his eyes. Then she pulled off the bandage and let him go home, but watched him till he was quite out of sight, to make sure that he returned toward his stall.

The next day four of Cassim's friends carried the body to the burying ground. The priest followed, reciting prayers, and behind him walked Ali Baba and several neighbors. Cassim's wife stayed at home, uttering woful cries with the women of the vicinity, who came, according to custom, during the funeral, and joining their wailings to hers, filled the quarter with sounds of sorrow.

The manner of Cassim's death was concealed and hushed up between his widow, Morgiana, and Ali Baba, so that nobody else in the city had the least suspicion of the real cause of it. Three or four days after the funeral Ali Baba removed his few goods openly to his sister-in-law's house, where it was agreed that in future he should live; but the money he had taken from the robbers he conveyed

thither by night. Lastly, he entrusted his eldest son with the management of Cassim's warehouse.

While these things were being done, the forty robbers again visited their retreat in the forest. Great, then, was their surprise to find Cassim's body taken away, with some of their bags of gold. "We are certainly discovered," said the captain. "The man we killed had an accomplice, and we must try to find him. What say you, my lads?"

All the robbers approved of the captain's proposal. "Well," said he, "one of the boldest and most skilful among you must go into the town, disguised as a traveller and a stranger, to try if he can hear any talk of the man whom we have killed, and endeavor to find out who he was and where he lived. This is a matter of the first importance, and for fear of treachery, I propose that whoever undertakes this business without success, even though the failure arises only from an error of judgment, shall suffer death."

Without waiting for the sentiments of his companions, one of the robbers started up and said, "I submit to the conditions and think it an honor to expose my life to serve the troop."

After this robber had received great commendations from the captain and his comrades, he

disguised himself, and taking his leave of the troop that night, went into the town just at daybreak, and walked up and down, till accidentally he came to the stall of Mustapha the cobbler. Mustapha was seated with an awl in his hand about to start work. The robber saluted him, and perceiving that he was old said, "You begin to work very early. Is it possible that one of your age can see so well? I question, even were it somewhat lighter, if you would be able to stitch."

"You do not know me," replied Mustapha; "for old as I am I have extraordinary good eyes; and you will not doubt it when I tell you that I sewed the body of a dead man together in a room where I had not so much light as I have now."

"Where was that?" asked the robber.

"You shall know no more," answered Mustapha.

The robber felt sure he had discovered what he sought. He pulled out a piece of gold, and putting it in Mustapha's hand said, "I do not want to pry into any of your secrets. The only thing I desire of you is to show me the house where you did this work."

"If I was disposed to do you that favor," replied Mustapha, "I could not. I was taken to a certain place, whence I was led blindfold to the house, and

I was brought back in the same manner. You see, therefore, the impossibility of my doing what you desire."

"Well," said the robber, "you no doubt have some remembrance of the way you were led. Come, let me blind your eyes at the same place. We will walk together. Perhaps you may be able to go where you did before; and as everybody ought to be paid for their trouble, there is another piece of gold for you. Gratify me in what I ask."

The two pieces of gold were a great temptation to Mustapha. He looked at them a long time in his hand without saying a word, but at last he pulled out his purse and put them in it. "I am not sure that I can remember the way exactly," said he to the robber, "but I will try what I can do."

To the great joy of the robber Mustapha rose and led him to the place where Morgiana had bound his eyes. "It was here that I was blindfolded," said Mustapha, "and afterward I turned this way."

He pointed out the direction, and the robber without further delay tied his handkerchief over the shoemaker's eyes and walked at his side till he stopped directly before Cassim's house, now occupied by Ali Baba. The robber marked the door

with a piece of white chalk which he had ready in his hand, and then he pulled off the bandage from



Mustapha's eyes and asked him if he knew whose house that was. Mustapha replied he did not live in the neighborhood and he could not tell.

The robber, finding he could discover no more from Mustapha, thanked him for the trouble he had taken and left him to go back to his stall, while he himself returned to the forest, persuaded that he would be very well received.

Shortly after the robber and Mustapha had parted, Morgiana went out of Ali Baba's house on some errand, and when she returned saw the mark the robber had made and stopped to observe it. "What can be the meaning of this?" said she to herself. "Somebody intends my master no good, I fear. At any rate, whatever the intention, I ought to guard against the worst."

Accordingly she fetched a piece of chalk and marked two or three doors on each side in the same manner.

By this time the robber had rejoined his troop. He told the others of his success, rejoicing over his good fortune in meeting so soon with a person who could inform him of what he wanted to know. The robbers listened to him with the utmost satisfaction, and the captain said, "Comrades, let us set off at once. We will go well armed, and that we may not excite suspicion we will enter the town in twos and we will meet at the great square. Meanwhile I will go with our comrade who

brought us the good news and find the house he has marked, that we may consult what had best be done."

They were soon ready and filed off in parties of two, and got into the town without being in the least suspected. The captain and he who had visited the town in the morning as a spy came in last and went to the street where the spy had marked Ali Baba's residence. When they came to the first of the houses which were marked, he pointed it out. But the captain observed that the next door was chalked in the same manner and in the same place, and showing it to his guide, asked him which house was the right one, that or the first. The guide was so confounded he knew not what answer to make, and he was still more puzzled when he saw five or six houses similarly marked. He assured the captain with an oath that he had marked but one and could not tell who had marked the rest.

The captain, finding that they could not distinguish the house the cobbler had stopped at, went to the great square where the robbers were to meet and told the troop that they had lost their labor and must return to their cave. So they separated in parties of two and returned as they had come.

When they were all together once more the captain explained the reason of their returning, and presently the robber who had acted as spy was declared deserving of death and was killed. But as the safety of the troop required the discovery of the plunderer of their cave, another of the gang offered to go and seek out the intruder's dwelling. He promised himself he would succeed better than his unlucky predecessor. His offer being accepted, he went and bribed Mustapha as the other had done, and being shown the house marked it in a place more remote from sight, with red chalk.

Not long afterward Morgiana, whose eyes nothing could escape, went out, and seeing the red chalk mark, she guessed that some evil was planned against her master, and marked the neighboring houses in the same place and manner.

The robber at his return to his company prided himself much on the care he had taken, and the captain and all of them thought now they must succeed. They conveyed themselves into the town with the same caution as before; but when the robber spy and his captain came to the street where Ali Baba lived they found several doors marked instead of one, at which the captain was enraged, and the spy was in great confusion. Thus the

troop was forced to retire a second time, and the robber who had been the author of the mistake underwent the same punishment as the other spy.

The captain, having lost two brave fellows, was afraid of diminishing his troop too much by pursuing this plan to get information of the residence of their plunderer. It was evident that his men's heads were not so good as their hands on such occasions, and he resolved to take on himself the important commission.

Accordingly he went and addressed himself to Mustapha, who did him the same service he had done the other robbers. The captain did not set any particular mark on the house, but examined and observed it so carefully that it was impossible for him to mistake it. When he returned to the forest cave where the troop waited for him he said, "Now, comrades, nothing can prevent our full revenge, as I am certain of the house, and on my way hither I have thought of how to put the revenge into execution."

He then told his plan and ordered them to go into the villages about and buy nineteen mules, with thirty-eight large leather jars, one full of oil and the others empty.

In two or three days the robbers had purchased the mules and jars, and the captain put one of his men into each jar with the weapons he thought fit, leaving open a place in the seam to allow the men to breathe. Lastly he rubbed the jars on the outside with oil from the full vessel, so that they all had the appearance of being used as oil receptacles, and no one would have suspected what was really inside.

Things being thus prepared, the nineteen mules were loaded with the jars containing the thirty-seven robbers, and the jar of oil. Then the captain, as their driver, set out with them, and reached the town by the dusk of evening, as he had intended. He led the mules through the streets to the house he sought, and found Ali Baba sitting in the doorway to take a little fresh air. The robber stopped his mules and said, "I have brought some oil a great way to sell at to-morrow's market, and it is now so late I do not know where to lodge. If I would not be troublesome to you, do me the favor to let me pass the night with you, and I shall be very much obliged by your hospitality."

Though Ali Baba had seen the captain of the robbers in the forest and had heard him speak, he did not know him in the disguise of an oil merchant. "You are quite welcome," said he, and immediately

opened the gates for the mules to go into the yard.

At the same time he called to a slave and ordered him, when the mules were unloaded, to put them



in the stable and feed them. Then he went to Morgiana and bid her get a good supper for his guest.

After the captain of the robbers had eaten, he went into the yard, took the lid off each jar, and gave his comrades orders what to do. Beginning at

the first jar and so on to the last, he said to each man: "As soon as I throw some pebbles from the window of the chamber which I shall occupy, do not fail to come out, and I will immediately join you."

He now returned into the house, and Morgiana taking up a light conducted him to his chamber. Then she left him, and he, to avoid any suspicion, put the light out and lay down in his clothes, that he might be the more ready to rise.

Morgiana began preparations for the morrow's breakfast; but while she was doing this, the oil burned out of the lamp she was using, and there was no more oil in the house, nor any candles. What to do she did not know. Abdalla, a fellow-servant, seeing her very uneasy, said, "Do not fret yourself, but go into the yard and take some oil out of one of the jars."

Morgiana thanked Abdalla for his advice, took the oil-pot, and went into the yard. When she came near the first jar the robber within said softly, "Is it time?"

Though much surprised at finding a man in the jar instead of the oil she wanted, she answered, without showing the least emotion, "Not yet, but presently."

She went quietly to all the jars till she came to the jar of oil, and as each robber in turn asked if it was time, she gave the same answer she had to the first. Thus she learned that her master had admitted thirty-eight robbers to his premises, and that the pretended oil merchant was their captain. She made what haste she could to fill her oil-pot and returned to the kitchen, where she lighted her lamp. Then she took a great kettle, filled that also from the oil-jar, and set it on a large wood fire. As soon as the oil boiled she went and poured enough into every jar to stifle and destroy the robber within.

This action was executed without any noise, and having returned to the kitchen with the empty kettle, she extinguished the fire she had made to boil the oil and blew out the light of her lamp. Then she remained silent, resolving not to go to rest till she had observed through a window of the kitchen, which opened toward the yard, what might follow.

She had not waited long before the captain of the robbers got up, opened his window, and finding no light and hearing no one stirring in the house, gave the appointed signal by throwing little stones, several of which hit the jars, as he doubted not by

the sound they gave. He then listened, but not hearing or perceiving anything whereby he could judge that his companions stirred, he threw stones a second and also a third time. He could not comprehend the reason that none of his men should answer his signal. Much alarmed, he went softly down into the yard, and going to the first jar, asked the robber if he was ready. Then he noticed the smell of hot boiled oil, and suspected that his plot to murder Ali Baba and plunder his house was discovered. Examining the jars one after another, he found that all his gang were dead, and enraged at having failed in his design, he forced the lock of a door that led from the yard to the garden, and running down a garden path climbed over a rear wall and made his escape.

When Morgiana saw him depart, she went to bed, satisfied to have succeeded so well in saving her master and his family.

Ali Baba, after breakfasting the next day, looked from a window out on the yard and was much surprised to see the oil-jars. He wondered that the merchant was not gone with them at daybreak and he asked Morgiana the reason.

"My good master," answered she, "you will be

better informed of what you wish to know when you have seen what I have to show you."

Morgiana then led the way to the yard and requested Ali Baba to look into the first jar and see



if there was any oil. Ali Baba looked in, and seeing a man, started back with a cry of alarm.

"Do not be afraid," said Morgiana. "The man you see there is dead."

"Ah, Morgiana," said Ali Baba, "explain yourself."

"Moderate your astonishment," replied Morgiana, "and do not excite the curiosity of your

neighbors by your loud exclamations. Look into the other jars."

Ali Baba examined all the other jars one after another, and when he came to that which contained oil, found the oil nearly gone. He stood for some time motionless, looking at the jars without saying a word, so great was his surprise. At last he asked, "And what is become of the merchant?"

"Merchant!" answered Morgiana, "he is as much one as I am"; and she told all she had done, from first observing the mark on the house to the destruction of the robbers and the flight of their captain.

On hearing of these brave deeds Ali Baba said to her, "God by your means has delivered me from the snares these robbers laid for my destruction. I therefore owe my life to you, and I give you your liberty from this moment. I will complete your recompense later."

Ali Baba's garden was very long and was shaded at the farther end by a number of large trees. Near these trees he and Abdalla dug a trench, long and wide enough to hold the bodies of the robbers. The earth was light and the burial was soon finished. Then Ali Baba hid the jars and weapons, and as he had no use for the mules he sent them to be sold in the market.

Meanwhile the captain of the forty robbers returned to the forest. He did not stay long. The loneliness of the cavern became frightful to him. He determined, however, to avenge the fate of his companions and to accomplish the death of Ali Baba. For this purpose he returned to the town and took lodging at an inn and disguised himself as a merchant. Under this assumed character he gradually conveyed a great many sorts of rich stuffs and fine linen from the cavern to his lodging, but with all the necessary precautions to conceal the place whence he brought them. In order to dispose of the merchandise he rented a warehouse, and this happened to be opposite Cassim's, which Ali Baba's son had occupied since the death of his uncle.

The robber took the name of Cogia Houssian. Ali Baba's son was, from his vicinity, one of the first to converse with Cogia Houssain, and the robber strove to cultivate his friendship. Two or three days after Cogia Houssain was settled, Ali Baba came to see his son, and the captain of the robbers recognized him at once. Thenceforth he became more attentive than ever to the young man and often had him to dine and sup with him, when he treated him very handsomely.

Ali Baba's son was so much straitened in his house for want of room that he could not entertain Cogia Houssain in return, and he spoke of this to his father.

"Son," said Ali Baba, "to-morrow get Cogia Houssain to accompany you, and as you pass by my door, call in. I will order Morgiana to provide a supper."

The next day Ali Baba's son and Cogia Houssain went by appointment for a walk and passed through the street where Ali Baba lived. When they came to the house the young man stopped and knocked at the door. "This, sir," said he, "is the home of my father. From the account I have given him of your friendship, he has charged me to procure him the honor of your acquaintance, and I desire you to add this pleasure to those for which I am already indebted to you."

Ali Baba received Cogia Houssain cordially and begged he would sup with him. Cogia Houssain accepted the invitation, and presently Morgiana brought in the supper. She knew the robber at first sight, notwithstanding his disguise, and looking at him very carefully perceived that he had a dagger under his garment.

When Abdalla had put the dessert of fruit and

wine before Ali Baba, Morgiana retired, dressed herself neatly, girded her waist with a silver-gilt girdle to which there hung a poniard, and put a handsome mask on her face. She then said to Abdalla, "Take your tambourine, and let us go and divert our master and his son's friend."

Abdalla took his tambourine and played all the way into the hall before Morgiana, who, when she came to the door, made a low obeisance, by way of asking leave to exhibit her skill, while Abdalla left off playing. "Come in, Morgiana," said Ali Baba, "and let Cogia Houssain see what you can do."

So Abdalla played on the tambourine and at the same time sung an air, to which Morgiana danced in such a manner as would have created admiration in any company. Presently she drew the poniard, and holding it in her hand, began a dance in which she outdid herself by the many light movements and surprising leaps with which she accompanied it. At last she snatched the tambourine from Abdalla with her left hand, and holding the poniard in her right, presented the other side of the tambourine, after the manner of those who get a living by dancing, to solicit the liberality of the spectators.

Ali Baba put a piece of gold into the tambourine, as did also his son, and Cogia Houssain had pulled his purse out and was taking a coin from it when Morgiana plunged the poniard into his heart.

“Unhappy woman!” exclaimed Ali Baba, “why have you done this to ruin me and my family?”

“It was to preserve, not to ruin you,” answered Morgiana; “for see here what an enemy you had entertained,” and she opened the pretended Cogia Houssain’s garment to show his dagger. “Look well at him, and you will find he is both the false oil merchant and the captain of the gang of forty robbers.”

“Morgiana,” said Ali Baba, “when I gave you your liberty I promised that my gratitude should not stop there, and as a proof of my sincerity I now make you my daughter-in-law.”

Then addressing his son he said, “I believe that you will not refuse Morgiana for your wife. You see that Cogia Houssain sought your friendship with a design to kill me, and if he had succeeded no doubt he would have sacrificed you also to his revenge. Consider that by marrying Morgiana you marry my preserver and your own.”

The son readily consented to the marriage, and a few days later the wedding was celebrated with a great feast.

The captain of the robbers was buried with his comrades, and at length Ali Baba began to think of visiting the robbers' cave. But he did not go for a whole year, as he supposed the other two members of the troop, whom he could get no account of, might be alive. At the year's end, when he found they had not made any attempt to disturb him, he again journeyed to the place where the treasure was concealed in the forest. On arriving at the cave he tied his horse to a tree. Then he approached the entrance, pronounced the words, "Open sesame!" and the door opened.

He entered the cavern, and by the condition he found things in, he judged that nobody had been there since the captain had fetched the goods for his shop. It was quite evident that all the robbers who knew of the cave were dead, and Ali Baba believed he was the only person in the world who had the secret of opening it, and that all the treasure was at his sole disposal. He put as much gold into his saddle-bags as his horse could carry, and returned to town. Some years

later he carried his son to the cave and taught him the secret of opening the door. The son handed the secret down to his posterity, who, using their good fortune with moderation, lived in great honor and splendor.

JOHNNY REED'S CAT

ONCE there was a sexton named Johnny Reed, and he and his wife kept a cat, just as most people do. This cat was a tomcat with one white forepaw. The rest of him was as black as ink. He was a well-behaved animal enough, and had no faults save a few tricks such as all cats play at times, and which seem born in the blood of the creatures.

The cat had been with the sexton some years when a strange thing occurred. Johnny Reed was returning from the church after locking it up late one evening and was thinking his wife would have a bit of fire for him at home, for the night was cold and a keen wind was blowing over the fields. He was walking along, carrying his lantern, when he noticed what seemed to be a lot of little lights near a roadside gate, some dancing about, others standing steady.

Johnny was not a man to be easily frightened, and he said, "Hello! What's here? This is

something I've never seen before"; and he walked straight to the gate, while the little fires all the time grew brighter.

When he got quite close he saw that what had appeared so strange was simply the eyes of nine black cats which had gathered there. He thought to scare them away, and he called out, "Sh-sh-sh!"

But never a cat stirred. That made the sexton angry. "I'll soon scatter you!" said he, and he was looking about for a stone when he heard a voice calling him.

"Johnny Reed!" the voice said.

"Here I am," he responded. "What do you want?"

"I have a message for you, Johnny Reed," said the voice.

"Well," Johnny answered, "I'm here, and I'd like to know who it is that's calling me. Was it one of you?" he asked jokingly, addressing the cats.

"Yes, of course it was," replied the leader of the gang, speaking as plainly as if he was a human being.

Johnny began to feel queer, for it was the first time he had ever been spoken to by a cat, and he did not know what the happening might lead to.



The sexton sees the nine cats

So he took off his hat to the cat, thinking that it perhaps was best to be as polite as possible.

"Well, sir," said he, "what can I do for you?"

"It's not much I want of you," replied the cat, "but you'd better not fail to do as I ask. I want you to tell Dan Ratsnatch that Peggy Poyson is dead."

"I will, sir," said Johnny, for he felt that to agree was the only safe way.

But now all the cats vanished and left Johnny wondering how he was to obey the strange command. He was a good deal scared, and after thinking a minute he turned and ran the rest of the way home as fast as he could go. "Nan," said he to his wife, as soon as he was inside the door, "who is Dan Ratsnatch?"

"Dan Ratsnatch!" said she. "I never heard of him. Certainly there's no one hereabouts of that name."

"Well, I must find him, whoever he is," said Johnny.

Then he told his wife how he had met the cats and how they had given him the message. While he talked, his cat was sitting in front of the fire as snug and comfortable as any cat could be, but when Johnny told his wife the message the cats had given him, the cat on the hearth jumped to his feet and looking

straight at Johnny said, "What! is Peggy Poyson dead? Then it's no time for me to be here"; and



with that the cat sprang up the chimney and was gone, and Johnny Reed never saw his cat afterward.

The sexton puzzled over the matter a good deal. As time went on he often inquired to see if he could learn of any man by the name of Dan Ratsnatch, but no one seemed to know of such a person, and at last he gave up asking. In fact, the more he thought about it the more he was of the opinion that Dan Ratsnatch must have been his own cat, and that likely enough Peggy Poyson was some relative.

THE MAGIC WELL

A LONG, long time ago, where the Lakes of Killarney now are, there was just a green and fertile valley, and in the depths of the valley was a town and a handsome palace. The palace was the home of King Corc, and he took great pride in it, but still more in a well that was in the courtyard. Indeed, the water of this well was so clear and pure that it was the wonder of all the world. Much did the king rejoice at having such a possession, but as people came in crowds from far and near to draw the precious water he was sorely afraid that in time they might exhaust the supply and the well would go dry. So at last he decided he would not allow the people to have any more water, and to keep them away he ordered a high wall to be built around the well.

On the day the wall was started an old hermit who dwelt far up on one of the neighboring mountains came down from the hut in which he lived

to fill a jar with the water. As he approached, the workmen stopped him.

"What does this mean?" said he. "I want to fill my jar."

"We would gladly let you have water," they replied, "but that is contrary to the king's commands."

Just then the king himself drew near to see how the work was progressing, and the hermit bowed before him and said, "I come for water just as I have twice a week for many years. Why do these men turn me away, and why is this wall being built?"

"Go elsewhere for your water," responded the king. "In future this well is only for the use of my own household."

"You do badly," said the hermit. "It is not right that the good things of the world should be selfishly hoarded. Stop this wicked work."

"I will not!" exclaimed the king, angrily.

"Then may this well be cursed!" said the old hermit, raising his hands toward heaven. "You will live to repent the day you ordered it shut away from your people. The well is almost as ancient as the valley itself and has belonged, not alone to the dwellers in the palace, but to all of us, from time



immemorial. It was dug by the fairies and it has magic power. Whenever any gold is dropped into it the well will become a torrent of destruction and will then punish you for your greed in keeping its water all to yourself."

With these words the aged hermit took up his jar and turned his steps toward his home on the mountain.

The work on the well continued till it was completed. The people roundabout all felt that they had suffered a great loss, and there was no lack of grumbling and protests. However, what the king chose to do he did, and there was no helping the matter. A stout door in the wall furnished access to the well, but the door was kept locked, and the king himself carried the key. Such was his concern about the precious water that he would not even trust his servants to draw it lest they should give some away, and when he wanted any for his own drinking he sent his daughter for it.

One night the king gave a grand entertainment. Many princes were present and no end of lords and nobles. There were wonderful doings throughout the palace, and in the town square great bonfires burned whose flames streamed up to the very sky. There was dancing and sweet music, and feasting in plenty for all who came. Nor was anyone turned away from the palace gates. "You are welcome, you are welcome heartily!" was the porter's salute to each new arrival. Among those who attended this grand entertainment was one young prince who

was comely to behold above all the rest. Right merrily did he dance that night with the old king's daughter, wheeling here and wheeling there as light as a feather, and footing it to the admiration of everyone.

After the dancing came the supper, and the young prince sat at table beside the beautiful princess. She smiled on him as often as he spoke to her, and he would have won more smiles by speaking to her still oftener than he did had it not been that he was obliged constantly to turn to the company and thank them for the many compliments passed on his fair partner and himself.

In the midst of the banquet one of the great lords said to King Corc, "May it please your majesty, here is everything in abundance that heart can wish for, both to eat and drink, except water."

"Water!" said the king, mightily pleased because someone had called for that of which intentionally there was a want; "water you shall have, my lord, speedily, and of such a delicious quality that I challenge all Ireland to equal it. Daughter, go fetch some in the golden vessel I caused to be made for the purpose."

The princess was annoyed to be told to perform so menial a service in the presence of all those

people. She hesitated to obey, and looked down on the floor. The king, who loved his daughter very much, seeing this, was sorry he had made such a request, but having said the word he would not recall it. He, however, thought of a way to make the proposal more to her liking, and said in a loud voice, "Daughter, I wonder not at your fearing to go alone so late at night, but no doubt the young prince at your side will go with you."

Of course this plan delighted the prince. He was on his feet instantly, took the golden vessel in one hand and a light in the other, and stood waiting for the princess. She only delayed him till she could get the key from her father, and then the two passed out of the hall together, while all present gazed admiringly after them.

They arrived at the well, and the princess unlocked the door.

"You hold the light," said the prince, "and I will dip up the water."

"Oh no," she replied, "my father would not like to have anyone but me do the dipping. Give me the vessel and I will fill it while you guard the door. We have to take the greatest care about this water."

So the prince stood at the door, and the princess reached down into the well to fill the golden vessel.



She had not used this receptacle before, and as it was much heavier than any to which she had been accustomed, she in some way lost her balance and fell into the well.

The prince sprang to save her, but in his haste he dropped the light he carried and was in darkness. He called the princess by name. There was no answer. He could see nothing, and still calling to her he groped his way to the well. To his surprise he found a stream of water gushing forth. He splashed into it ankle deep, and in a moment more it was swirling about his knees with a violence that compelled him to turn back.

Greatly distressed, he ran to the palace hall to tell what had happened. The king and his guests hastened out, but as they started to go down the palace steps they discovered that the courtyard was full of water. They could hear it rushing from the well and see it surging everywhere. All the time it was rapidly rising. Now it flooded the steps, and they retreated into the great hall. The water followed them, and they were up to their necks in it before they could collect their thoughts and decide what to do. Then the water passed over their heads, and at length it reached such a height that the entire green valley where the town and palace stood was filled, and thus the present Lakes of Killarney were formed.

Yet the king and his guests were not drowned. Neither was the fair princess. She appeared in the banquet hall the very next night, and so did all the rest of the company, and they continued their grand entertainment. Every night since, the same merrymaking and dancing and feasting go on in the palace at the bottom of the lake, and this nightly revel will continue for all time, unless someone brings forth out of the water the golden vessel which was the cause of all the mischief. If that vessel could be fished up from the depths where it has

lain in the ooze all these centuries the lakes would vanish. Their basin would again be a green valley, and the life in the old town and in the palace of King Corc would be resumed where the flood cut it off.

Should there be any who do not credit this story they can go and see the Lakes of Killarney, for there the lakes are to this day ; and it is told that when the waters are low and clear the ancient dwellings and the stately palace may be viewed in the bottom by those who have good eyesight, and the buildings can be seen so plainly there is no need of the help of spectacles.

HANS IN LUCK

HANS had served his master seven years, and now he decided to stay no longer. "Master," said he, "I want to return to my mother; so give me my wages."

"You have served me faithfully," said the master. "As the service has been, so shall be the reward," and he gave Hans a lump of gold as big as his head.

Hans pulled his handkerchief out and tied the gold up in it. Then he hitched the bundle to the end of a stick, took the stick over his shoulder, and set off on his way home.

As he was trudging along, always putting one foot before the other, he met a man riding a spirited horse. "Ah!" cried Hans, "what a capital thing it is to ride! This man sits as much at his ease as if he were in an armchair. He stumbles over no stones, wears out no shoe leather, and gets to his journey's end almost without knowing it."

The horseman heard what Hans said, and he pulled up and called out to him, "Well, my boy, why do you go on foot?"

"Because I must," Hans replied; "though I would not mind it so much if it were not for this bundle."

"What is in your bundle?" asked the man.

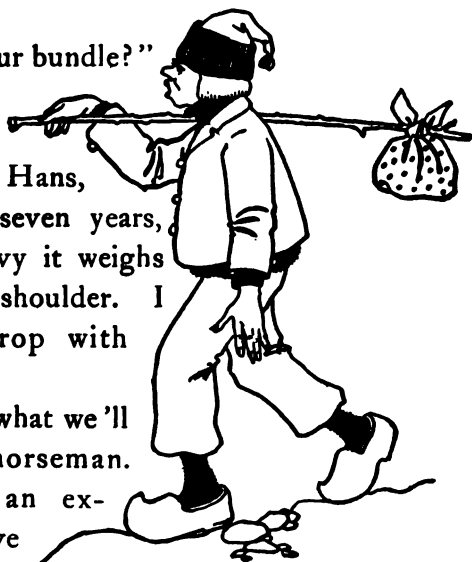
"A lump of gold," answered Hans, "my wages for seven years, and it is so heavy it weighs terribly on my shoulder. I am ready to drop with weariness."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said the horseman.

"We'll make an exchange. I will give you my horse, and you shall give me your lump of gold."

"With all my heart," was the lad's response; "but I warn you that you will have a job to carry it."

The horseman dismounted, took the gold, and helping Hans into the saddle gave him the reins.



"When you want to go fast," said he, "you must cluck with your tongue and cry, 'Get up!'"

So Hans rode gaily along, feeling very much pleased. After a while he fancied he would like to go quicker, and he clucked with his tongue and cried, "Get up!"

The horse broke into a smart trot, and Hans began to bob up and down. It made his teeth chatter, and he tried to cling to the saddle, but the first he knew he was tumbled off into a ditch of



muddy water. The horse would have got away had it not been stopped by a peasant who happened to come along the road driving a cow.

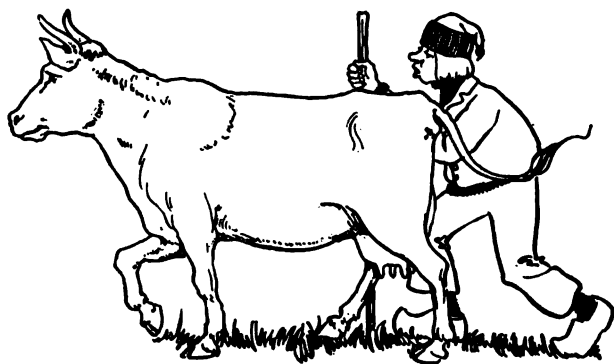
Hans dragged himself out of the ditch and got on his feet, a good deal vexed over the accident. "It's a poor joke, riding," said he to the peasant, "especially on such a horse as mine, which no sooner starts to trot than it throws you off so that you come near breaking your neck. There's far more sense in owning a cow. You can walk along behind her in peace and quietness, and you can have her milk, and butter and cheese every day into the bargain. What would I not give to own that cow of yours!"

"Well," said the man, "since it will be doing you such a favor, I don't mind exchanging my cow for your horse."

Hans gladly consented, and the peasant, swinging himself into the saddle, was soon out of sight. Then Hans plodded along driving the cow before him and thinking all the while of the clever bargain he had made. "What a lucky fellow I am!" said he. "Now that I have this cow I only need to get a bit of bread, which is easily done, and I then have everything I can possibly want to make a good meal. For I shall always be able to have butter and cheese with the bread, and if I am thirsty I can

milk my cow and drink. What more could I desire?"

He went on toward his mother's village. As the day advanced the heat became oppressive, and about noon, while he was crossing a lonely heath, he concluded to have a drink of milk. So he tied his cow



to a bush, and taking off his leather cap to serve for a pail, he began to milk, but not a drop could he squeeze out. The cow was dry. Besides, Hans was not used to milking and was clumsy about it. So the cow soon grew impatient and gave him such a kick that he was knocked over and quite dazed. Indeed, for a few minutes he did not know where he was.

Fortunately a butcher came along just then with a young pig in a wheelbarrow. "What is the

trouble?" cried he, helping poor Hans onto his feet.

Hans related to him all that had happened, and the butcher passed Hans a flask, saying, "There, drink and refresh yourself. Of course the cow would give no milk. She is old and only fit to be slaughtered."

"Well, to be sure," said Hans, scratching his head, "who would have thought it? If the cow was yours she would be very useful even though she is dry, but I am no butcher, and I don't care much for beef, anyway. I like pork better. Now, if I had that young pig in your wheelbarrow, I could take care of him till he got big and fat, and then what fine meat I would have! and oh, the sausages!"

"Look here!" responded the butcher, "I will exchange and let you have my pig for your cow."

"Heaven reward such kindness!" exclaimed Hans, and at once gave him the cow.

The man untied the pig from the wheelbarrow and handed the rope with which it had been bound, and which was still attached to a hind leg, over to Hans.

So Hans marched on congratulating himself on his good luck. "It does beat all!" said he. "As

soon as anything goes wrong, some person or other always happens along to set things right."

After a while he fell in with a youth who was carrying a fine white goose under his arm. They bid each other good-day, and Hans began to tell about his luck, and how he never failed to come off best in the trades he made. When he finished his story he asked the youth what he was going to do with his goose.

"I am carrying it to market," was the reply; "but as you seem fond of exchanges, I would n't mind giving it to you for your pig. The goose has been fattening for eight weeks. Just hold it and feel how heavy it is. It will be a rich morsel when it is roasted."

"Yes," agreed Hans as he took the bird and considered its weight, "this is a very fine goose; and yet my pig is not to be despised."

He seemed to hesitate to make the exchange, and his companion, after looking cautiously around, remarked with a shake of the head, "I am afraid there is something wrong about your pig."

"Why, what could be wrong about him?" inquired Hans.

"In the village I have just left," continued the lad, "a pig has lately been stolen from the sheriff's

own sty. I fear it is the one you have. They are making a search for the thief, and you would be in a bad fix if the pig was found in your possession.



The best you could expect would be to have them shut you up in jail for a month or two."

Hans turned pale with fright. "Alas!" he cried, "help me out of this scrape. I am a stranger in these parts. Take my pig and give me your goose."

"It will be running some risk," answered the youth, "but I will do it sooner than that you should come to grief."

He passed the goose over to Hans, and then taking the cord which was attached to the pig, he went quickly away along a bypath. Lucky Hans, much relieved, continued his journey toward home with the goose under his arm. "The more I think of it," said he, "the better this bargain seems. I shall have roast goose, and there will be plenty of fat left to eat with my bread for a year to come. Then there will be the beautiful white feathers. I can stuff my pillow with them, and how comfortably I shall sleep, and how pleased my mother will be!"

Presently, as he was passing a farmhouse, he saw a scissors-grinder at work in the yard. His wheel went whirring round, and he was singing these words:

"The scissors I grind, and the wheel I turn,
And all good fellows my trade should learn."

Hans stopped to watch him, and at last spoke to him and said, "You must be doing very well at this trade of yours, since you are so merry over your grinding."

"Yes," said the man, "my handiwork is quite profitable. Any grinder who understands his business and is willing to work early and late will never

put his hand in his pocket without finding money there. But where did you get that fine goose?"

"I exchanged it for a pig," replied Hans.

"And where did you get the pig?"

"That I exchanged for a cow."

"And where did you get the cow?"

"That I exchanged for a horse."

"And where did you get the horse?"

"For the horse I gave a lump of gold as big as my head."

"And where did you get the gold?"

"Oh, that was my wages for seven years' service."

"I suppose you think you got a bargain every time you made an exchange," said the scissors-grinder.

"Yes," replied Hans, "I am sure of it."

"Now if you could only hear money rattling in your pocket every time you moved, you would be perfectly satisfied, wouldn't you?" the scissors-grinder asked.

"Why, yes, I think so," said Hans; "but how could that be managed?"

"You must become a grinder like me," replied the man. "All you want is a grindstone. The rest comes of itself. The grindstone I am using is a little the worse for wear, and I don't mind letting you have it for your goose. What say you?"

"Take the goose," was the lad's answer. "If I can find money whenever I put my hand in my



pocket, there is nothing more left to wish for. I can buy everything I need."

So he parted with the goose and walked off with the old grindstone on his shoulder, perfectly contented. "I must have been born under a lucky star!" cried he, while his eyes sparkled for joy.

After a while he began to weary of his burden, and there was all the more reason for this because

he had been on his feet since daybreak. He halted often to rest, and he said to himself, "How nice it would be to have nothing whatever to carry!"

He went on at a snail's pace till at last he came to a well, and he stopped to get a drink of the cool water. He set the grindstone beside the well and stooped and drank, but in rising he stumbled against the grindstone and it fell splash into the well. He looked to see if he could recover it, but it had gone down out of sight. Then he jumped for joy and thought himself very fortunate to be relieved of that heavy weight which had been such a hindrance to him.

"I really believe I am the luckiest fellow under the sun," declared he.

So on he went with a light and merry heart, free from all care, and in due time reached his mother's home.

NEZUMI THE BEAUTIFUL

ON a certain farm lived two rats. There they dwelt happily for many years. These rats had a large family of children, and every summer they led the little ones into the grain fields, where, under shelter of the waving stalks, the young rats learned the history and cunning of their people. When work was done, they would scamper away and play with their friends until it was time to return home.

The most beautiful of the children was a daughter, Nezumi. She had a sleek, silvery skin, bright, intelligent eyes, tiny ears, and pearly teeth, and she was the pride of her parents' hearts. As Nezumi grew to maturity it seemed to the fond father and mother that no one with whom they were acquainted was important enough to marry her; and after much pondering they decided that they would accept only the most powerful being in the whole universe for her husband and their son-in-law.

The parents discussed this weighty question with a trusted neighbor, who said, "If you would wed your daughter to the most powerful being in the universe, you must ask the sun to marry her. His empire knows no bounds."

So they journeyed to a mountain top and called to the sun, and he listened graciously. "Oh Sun," they said, "we would have you accept our daughter for your wife, for she is so beautiful that only the most powerful being in the universe is worthy of her."

The sun smiled and rejoined, "Your daughter is indeed beautiful, and I thank you for coming so far to offer her to me. Yet, though my kingdom is vast, oftentimes when I would illumine the world a cloud floats by and prevents me. I cannot pierce the cloud. Therefore the cloud is more powerful than I am, and you must go to him, if your wish is to be attained."

In nowise discouraged, the rats turned away from the sun and watched until a cloud paused near the mountain top to rest after a flight through the air. They explained their errand and the cloud replied with a look of mischief in his dusky eyes, "You are mistaken if you think I am the most powerful being. It is true that I sometimes hide the sun,

but I cannot withstand the force of the wind. When he begins to blow I am driven away and torn in pieces. My strength is not equal to the power of the wind. Therefore it is he whom your daughter should marry, not me."

Then the rats, intent on their daughter's future prosperity, descended from the mountain and waylaid the wind as he swept through a pine forest. He was about to awaken the plain beyond, and stir the grass and the flowers into motion. The anxious parents made known their errand and repeated what had been said to them by the sun and the cloud.

In response the wind whispered, "It is true that I have strength to drive away the clouds, but on the borders of the grain fields there is a wall against which I am powerless. He stands there unmoved, no matter how I push and buffet. You must go to him if you would have the mightiest being in the universe for your son-in-law."

The rats, still persistent in their quest, came to the wall and told their story.

"Yes, I can withstand the wind," the wall answered, "but the rat undermines me and makes holes through me. To him you must go if you would wed your daughter to the most powerful being in the universe. I cannot overcome the rat."

So the parent rats returned to their home at the farm. Nezumi, their beautiful daughter with the silken coat and sparkling eyes, rejoiced when she heard that she was to marry one of her own people, for her heart had already been given to a playfellow of the grain fields. Shortly afterward their wedding was celebrated, with feasting and mirth, and they lived for many years as king and queen of the rat world.



THE ELVES OF THE HAUNTED SHIPS

SANDY McCLURG was the owner of thirty acres of peat bog, seven good cows, a pair of horses, and sixteen sheep, and he was the husband of the handsomest woman to be found in any parish for a score of miles around. The comeliness of his wife was in fact famous among all who lived on the shores of Kettle Bay, and many a lad sighed the day she was married.

However, married she was, and home she was carried to Sandy McClurg's cottage. Of course the neighboring swains now ceased to love and sue after her, but there were admirers of another sort who did not consider their claims at all abated or their hopes lessened. These were the water elves who sometimes kept festival in the hulks of two old vessels that lay in shallow water, half buried in the sand, not far from the shore of Kettle Bay. Now they began to plot how they could get Sandy McClurg's wife away from him.



Sandy bears voices in the old wrecks

Three years passed, and one evening Sandy took his net on his back and his steel spear in his hand and went down to Kettle Bay to fish. He waded into the water right between the two black and decayed hulks, and setting his net awaited the coming of the tide.

Presently the water began to rise, and to wheel and foam about the ancient wrecks. The night was dark and the wind very gentle, and the singing of the increasing waters among the shells and pebbles could be heard for miles. All at once lights began to glance and twinkle on board the two old ships from every hole and seam. Then there came to Sandy's ears from the nearer vessel the sound of hatchet blows on wood, rousing the echoes far and wide. Sandy was still more amazed when shrill voice called out from the more remote ship, "Ho, brothers! what are you doing now?"

The hatchet blows ceased for a few moments, while a still shriller voice from the other ship replied, "We're making a wife for Sandy McClurg."

Then loud quavering laughter was heard resounding from stem to stern of both the old hulks.

Sandy, besides being a devout and God-fearing man, was shrewd and bold, and he lost no time in getting home to see what he could do to defend his

home from the designs of the water fairies. As soon as he arrived he bolted and locked the doors, fastened all the windows, threw salt into the fire, and did everything else he could think of to guard the place against the designs of the crafty sea elves.

His wife looked on all this with wonder, but there was something in her husband's face that hindered her from intruding either questions or advice.

When he had taken what precautions he could, he collected his family around the hearth and had a long and serious conversation with them about religion. After that he took the big Bible, that had been his father's, from the shelf, read aloud several lengthy passages from it, and then knelt and continued fervently in prayer as if he would never stop.

Near the mid-hour of the night the rush of a horse's feet was heard, then the sound of a rider leaping from its back, and a heavy knock came at the door. "Open!" cried a voice. "There's sickness at Lord Lowry's to-night, and the goodwife here is needed to help. So come, woman, and mount at once on my horse behind me, and I will carry you without delay."

"Ah," said Sandy's wife, "if there's sickness at Lord Lowry's I must go immediately. Many a

good turn have they done for us. Now, Sandy my man, fetch me my hood and shawl."

But he laid his arm around his wife's shoulders and said, "If there were sickness in every home in the parish you should not cross our threshold to-night. I have said and I have sworn it, but seek not to know why or wherefore."

"Well, at any rate," said the wife, "let us return a civil answer, though it's sinful-like not to give the messenger a sup of something to eat and drink before he starts back."

"To such a messenger and to those that sent him no apology is needed," said Sandy. "Let him depart."

Then the man outside was heard muttering curses over the inhospitable treatment he had experienced, and immediately afterward the clatter of his horse's hoofs sounded on the road as he galloped away.

"Sandy," said his wife, taking his hand in hers, "are you not a queer man to put on these hard-hearted looks, and go waving your arms that way as if you were saying, 'I will not take the counsel of such a foolish body as this wife of mine'?"

But Sandy's only answer was, "We have been stopped in our devotion. So let us pray once

more"; and after extinguishing all the lights, down he knelt, and his household with him.

"This beats all," muttered the wife to herself, "and if I don't find out what is the matter before morning my tongue is no longer a tongue, nor my power to speak worth the having."

Her husband continued earnestly in prayer. He besought to be preserved from the cunning of Satan, from witches, ghosts, goblins, elves, fairies, spunkies, and water kelpies.

"God guide my goodman's lips," said the wife. "I never heard such a prayer from human lips before. But, Sandy my man, rise! What fearful light is this? The wheat stacks are in a blaze."

A flood of light from the leaping flames filled all the yard before the house. But to the terrors of fire Sandy was as immovable as to the appeal of the messenger with regard to the sickness in the family of Lord Lowry. He held back his wife and would let no one venture out. He did not even unbar the door. So the wheat stacks burned to the ground. Many other wives were tried to entice the honest farmer and his wife to come forth, and when all these stratagems failed, there was silence for a while, and then came a series of long, shrill shrieks of anger, and the elves were gone.

In the morning when Sandy went out he found leaning against one of the posts of the porch a piece of black ship oak rudely fashioned into something like human form, and those who were wise in fairy lore were firmly of the opinion that the water elves would have made this stick seem to be actual flesh and blood in the likeness of Sandy's wife, and that the elves wished to take her and palm the stick off on him in her place.



So it was determined to put the stick beyond the chance of any use for future deception by burning it. A fire was kindled, and the elfin carving was

tossed into the flames from the prongs of four pitchforks. The blaze that arose then was awful to behold. Hissings and explosions and loud cracklings and strange noises were heard in the midst of the fire, and everyone looked on with awe until the flames subsided and nought was left but a heap of ashes and a few red coals.

A VISIT TO THE MOON

DANIEL O'ROURKE lived in Ireland in County Kerry, and at the time of the adventures we have to relate, his landlord had just come back from foreign parts, where he had been travelling. To celebrate his return the landlord gave a great dinner to all his tenants. There was everything of the best and plenty of it, and they ate and drank and danced to their hearts' content. Daniel O'Rourke did his full share in the eating and dancing, and perhaps rather more than his share in the drinking; for late in the evening, when the merry-making was at an end, his mind was a bit muddled.

He had a little river to cross on his way home and there was no bridge. However, at the ford of Ballyash was a line of stepping stones where one could get over easily and safely. To this crossing came Daniel O'Rourke, but as he was hopping along rather unsteadily from stone to stone it unfortunately occurred to him to look up to the stars and bless himself. The result was that he missed his footing,

and souse he went into the water. It was shallow enough where he fell, but in floundering about he



got beyond his depth. "Death alive!" thought he, "I'll be drowned now!"

Nevertheless, he began swimming, and he swam and swam and swam until at last he got ashore somehow or other on a desolate island. There he went wandering about hither and thither, and after a time found himself in the midst of a big bog. The

moon was shining as bright as day, and he looked east and west, and north and south, and every way, and nothing did he see but bog, bog, bog. "I never in the world can find the way I got into this terrible

bog," said he. "Sure and certain am I that it will be my burial place."

So he sat down on a stone which, as good luck would have it, was close by, and he began to scratch his head and sing, when suddenly a dark shadow fell on him. He looked up and saw something that seemed to be moving down between him and the moon, and he could not tell what it was. Down it came with a pounce right in front of him, and to his surprise he found it was an eagle — as fine a one as ever was seen in the county of Kerry.

The eagle looked Daniel full in the face, and said he, "Daniel O'Rourke, how do you do?"

"Very well, I thank you, sir," Daniel replied. "I hope I see you well, too," and all the time he was wondering how an eagle came to speak like a human being.

"What brings you here, Dan?" asked the eagle.

"Nothing at all, sir," was Dan's answer, "and I wish I was safe home."

"Is it out of the island you want to go, Dan?" said the eagle.

"'T is, sir," replied Dan.

So he told the eagle how he had fallen into the water and swam to the island, and how he got into the bog and did not know his way out.

"Dan," said the eagle, after a minute's thought, "this is no place for a respectable man like you to be staying. Get up on my back and I'll fly you out of the bog."

"I am afraid," responded Daniel, "that your honor is making game of me; for who ever heard of riding horseback on an eagle before?"

"On the word of a gentleman," said the eagle, putting his right foot on his breast, "I am quite in earnest. So now either take my offer or starve in the bog. Besides, I see your weight is sinking the stone on which you are sitting."

It was true enough as the eagle said. The stone was going down into the soft mud of the bog from under Daniel, and he had no choice but to go with the eagle. So he said, "I thank your honor for your civility, and I accept your kind offer."

Then he mounted on the eagle's back and put his arms about the bird's neck. At once the eagle flew up in the air. Little did Daniel O'Rourke know the trick the eagle was going to serve him. Up, up, up the great bird flew, and Daniel became more and more alarmed. Presently he spoke, thinking the eagle did not know the right way to his cabin, and because he was in his power entirely, he addressed him very civilly. "Sir," said he, "please your

honor's glory, and with humble submission to your better judgment, I think you'd better fly down a bit. I can see my cabin right below us. Will you be so



good as to let me off there? and many thanks to your worship."

"Arrah, Dan!" the eagle replied, "do you take me for a fool? Look down in the next field. Don't you see two men and a gun? By my word, it would be no joke to be shot to oblige a good-for-nothing blackguard that I picked up off a cold stone in a bog."

"Bother you!" said Dan to himself; but he did not speak out, for where was the use?

The eagle kept on flying, flying upward, while Daniel was every minute asking him to fly down,

and all to no purpose. "Where, may I ask, are you going, sir?" said he to the eagle after a while.

"Hold your tongue, Dan," was the eagle's response. "Mind your own business and don't be interfering with the business of other people."

"Faith, this is my business, I think!" exclaimed Daniel.

"Be quiet, Dan," ordered the eagle sharply, and Daniel said no more.

Finally, where should they come to but to the moon, which was all bare and nothing growing on it except a single ragged bush sticking out at one side.

"Dan," said the eagle, "I'm tired with this long fly. I had no notion it was so far."

"My lord, sir," answered Dan, "who asked you to fly so far? Was it I? Did not I beg and beseech you to stop half an hour ago?"

"There's no use talking, Dan," the eagle said. "I'm tired, and you must get off and sit down on the moon until I rest myself."

"Is it sit down on the moon?" cried Dan. "Is it on that little round thing, not much bigger than a cart wheel? Sure, I'd fall off in a minute, and be killed and smashed all to bits. You are a vile deceiver — so you are!"

"Not at all, Dan," replied the eagle. "You can

catch fast hold of the bush that's sticking out of the side of the moon, and it will keep you up."

"I won't then!" declared Daniel.

"Maybe not," said the eagle, very calmly. "But if you don't, my man, I'll just give you a shake and one slap of my wing and send you down to the ground, where every bone in your body will be broken into bits as small as drops of dew on a cabbage leaf."

"Why, then," said Daniel, "I'm in a fine way to have come along with the likes of you!"

But he had to obey, and he got off the bird's back, took hold of the bush, and sat down on the moon, and a mighty cold seat it was, I can tell you. When the eagle had him fairly landed he turned about on him and said, "Good day to you, Daniel O'Rourke, I think I've tricked you now to my satisfaction. You robbed my nest last year (which was true enough, though how he found it out is hard to say) and in return you are freely welcome to make yourself at home dangling there on the moon."

"Is this the way you leave me, you brute?" shouted Daniel. "You ugly unnatural beast, and is this the way you intend to serve me? Bad luck to you with your hooked nose, and to all your breed!"

But the eagle only burst out laughing, spread his big wings, and flew away. Daniel bawled after him to stop, yet he might have called and bawled forever without the eagle's caring. Off the bird went, and Daniel never saw him afterward.

As may be supposed, Daniel O'Rourke was now in a very disconsolate condition, and he kept roaring out for grief until all at once a door opened right in



the middle of the moon, creaking on its hinges as if it had not been opened for a month, and out there

walked, who do you think, but the man in the moon himself?

"Good morrow to you, Daniel O'Rourke," said he. "How do you do?"

"Very well, thank your honor," Dan replied. "I hope your honor is well."

"What brought you here, Dan?" asked the man in the moon.

"Well," responded Daniel, "I was at a feast the landlord gave last evening, and as I crossed the stepping stones at Ballyash Ford on my way home I fell into the water and swam to a dissolute island where I lost my way in a bog, and a thief of an eagle came and promised to fly me out of it. Instead of that he flew me up here to the moon."

The man in the moon listened till this story was finished, and then taking a pinch of snuff he said, "Dan, you must not stay here."

"Indeed, sir," was Dan's response, "'t is much against my will that I'm here at all. But how am I to go back?"

"That's your affair," said the man in the moon. "Mine is to tell you that you must not stay. So be off at once!"

"I'm doing no harm," said Dan, "sitting here holding on to this bush lest I fall off."

"You must not hold on any longer, Dan," said the man in the moon.

"Pray, sir," said Daniel, "may I inquire how many there are in your family that you will not give a poor traveller lodging? I'm sure it's not often you're troubled with strangers coming to see you, for 't is a long way."

"I'm by myself, Dan," replied the man in the moon, "but you'd better let go your grip on that bush."

"Faith!" exclaimed Daniel, "I'll not let go my grip, and the more you bid me the more I won't let go."

"Then I shall make you, Dan," declared the man in the moon.

"Why, my little fellow," retorted Daniel, looking at him sharply from head to foot and taking in his weight and strength, "there are two words to that bargain, and I'll not budge—but you may if you like."

"We'll see how that is to be," said the man in the moon, and back he went through the door, giving it a great bang after him.

It was plain he was huffed, and the bang of the door so jarred the moon that Daniel was afraid it would go to pieces. When that did not happen

he began to think rather anxiously how he could hold his own against the little man; for he did not dare to let go of the bush, and therefore had only one free hand.

Pretty soon out came the little man armed with the kitchen cleaver. He stepped to the bush, gave its butt a couple of slashes, and whap! it snapped off.

"Good-by to you, Dan," cried the spiteful little old man, when he saw him falling with the bush still in his grasp. "I thank you for your visit, and may fair weather attend you, Daniel."

Dan had no time to make any answer, for he was tumbling over and over and rolling and rolling at a fearful rate down through the sky. "God help me!" said he. "This is a pretty pickle for a decent man to be seen in at this time of night."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when whiz! a flock of wild geese came flying past close to him, and they were all the way from Daniel's own home region, else how should they have known him as they did?

The old gander who was the leader turned his head and cried out, "Is that you, Dan?"

"It is," replied Daniel.

"Well, Daniel O'Rourke," said the gander, "how are you in health this morning?"

"Quite hearty," was Dan's response, drawing in his breath, for he was greatly in want of some. "I hope your honor's the same."

"I think 't is falling you are, Daniel," remarked the gander.

"You may well say that, sir," answered Dan.

"And where are you going so fast?" the gander asked.

"That's more than I know," said Daniel. "You see last evening I was at a grand dinner the master gave his tenantry, and I fell into the water on my way home and swam to a dissolute island, where I got lost in a bog, and a thief of an eagle flew me up to the moon. There he left me, and the man in the moon turned me out."

"Dan," said the gander, "I'll save you. Put out your hand and catch me by the leg and I'll fly you home."

"You're a jewel!" exclaimed Dan, though all the time he thought within himself that he did n't much trust the creature.

But he had had enough of falling, and he caught the gander by the leg. At the same time the gander gripped Dan's arm with a claw, and away they went, with the rest of the geese, as swift as the wind.

They flew and they flew and they flew until

Daniel saw the sea down below him, and, far off, a line of rocky coast sticking up out of the water.



"Ah, my lord," said he to the gander, very politely, for he thought it best to keep a civil tongue in his head, "fly to land, if you please."

"It is impossible, Dan, for a while," said the gander, "because, you see, we are going to Arabia."

"To Arabia!" repeated Daniel. "That's surely some place in foreign parts, a long distance away."

Oh, Mr. Gander, then I'm a man to be pitied among you!"

"Whist! whist! you foolish fellow!" said the gander. "I tell you Arabia is a very decent sort of a country, only it has a little more sand than need be."

As they were talking, a ship hove in sight, scudding along beautiful before the wind. "Ah, sir," said Daniel, "will you not kindly drop me on that ship?"

"We are not fair over it," the gander replied. "If I dropped you now, you would go splash into the sea."

"I know better than that," declared Daniel. "It is just under us. So let me drop at once."

"If you must, you must," answered the gander. "There, take your own way," and he opened his claw.

He was right, after all, for down went Dan plump into the very bottom of the sea. Down to the very bottom he went, and he had given himself up as lost forever when along came a whale, blinking his eyes after his night's sleep. Never a word did he say, but lifting up his tail he splashed Daniel all over with the cold salt water till there was not a dry stitch on his whole body.

Then he heard somebody saying, and the voice he well knew, "Get up, Daniel O'Rourke! What are you doing here?"

With that he awoke, and lo! there was his wife



Judy, and she had a tub full of water, which she was splashing all over him, for though she was a good

wife, her anger was easily stirred, and she had her own ways of punishing him when he did things of which she did not approve.

“Get up!” she cried again, “and why are you lying here all night outside the gate? An uneasy resting you must have had of it.”

Sure enough, she was right about that, for he had been fairly bothered out of his senses with all he had gone through since he left the landlord’s feast the previous evening.

THE LOST WIFE

THERE was once a man and wife who had a little farm near the base of a lofty height which was known as the Blue Mountain. They loved each other tenderly, and the husband would not have given up his wife for all the riches in the world. For her part, she was constantly thinking how best to please him, and so they were very happy.

One day, while the man was working in the fields, a great longing came over him to see his wife, and without waiting for the hour of sunset, which was when he usually quit his labor, he ran home. Alas! she was gone. He looked high and low, he ran here, there, and everywhere, he wept, he called to her. In vain! She was not to be found.

Then the man was so heartbroken that he no longer cared to live. He could think of nothing but the loss of his dear wife. At last he determined to travel all over the world in search of her. So he began to walk straight on through the valleys and

over the hills. Sad and thoughtful he wandered for many days until he reached a castle close by the shore of a large lake. Here he stopped, hoping he might learn something about his lost wife.

But at the castle door he was met by an old woman who said, "What do you want here, unlucky wretch? If my husband sees you he will kill you instantly."

"Who is your husband?" asked the traveller.

"Do you not know him?" said she. "My husband is the Water King. Everything under water obeys him. Depart quickly; for if he finds you here he will certainly devour you."

"I am without shelter for the night," said the man, "and am worn and weary. I can go no farther."

"Well," said the old woman, "come in, and I will hide you behind the stove."

Scarcely was the man hidden when the Water King returned. As soon as he crossed the threshold he called out, "Wife, I smell human flesh. Give it to me quickly, for I am hungry."

She dared not attempt to deceive him, and she told him how the traveller had sought shelter, and where he was hiding. The poor man was terribly frightened and trembled in every limb. He began

to stammer excuses and to beg the Water King not to kill him. "I came here to seek news of my wife who is lost," he explained, "and I pray that you will help me to find her."

"As you love your wife so tenderly," said the Water King, "I will spare you, but I know nothing of where she is. However, spend the night here, and to-morrow go to my brother, the Fire King. He may be able to do better for you than I can."

Glad to have escaped so easily, the man thanked the Water King, and the next morning he resumed his journey and went on till he found the Fire King. But the Fire King was unable to give him any information of the missing wife and could only advise him to consult his other brother, the Air King.

Then the man went to the Air King, who told him he had seen such a woman as he described on the Blue Mountain.

The traveller was cheered at this news and back he went to his home at the foot of the Blue Mountain. The mountain was very steep, and he could only climb it by following up the hollow of a mountain torrent that came rushing down the steepes. The little birds in the bushes along the watercourse kept calling to him and saying, "My good man, don't go up there. You'll be killed!"

But he kept resolutely on till he came to a little village of thatched cottages. From these cottages



a crowd of wizards and witches ran forth and surrounded him screaming at the top of their voices, "What are you looking for?"

"My wife," he answered.

"She is here," they cried, "but you cannot take her away unless you recognize her among two hundred other women all exactly like her."

Then they shouted to have the women come out of the cottages. In a few moments the women were outside gathered about the doorways, and the witches and wizards said to the man, "Follow us, now, and we will see how well you will succeed."

"What! not know my own wife!" exclaimed the man, and he walked toward the women. "Why, here she is!" said he, and he clasped her in his arms, while the wife, delighted to be with her husband again, kissed him fondly.

The wizards and witches danced about waving their arms and shrieking with disappointment, but the man had beaten them in the test they had selected, and they did not hinder him taking his wife and departing. The two immediately began the descent of the mountain, and as they picked their way carefully down the ravine, the man said, "What a long, long time we have been separated! Tell me why you left me so suddenly. If you only knew what I have suffered! I have sought you all over the world."

“I did not leave you willingly,” she replied. “A stranger came and asked me to go out and look at some ducks that were on the stream near our cottage. But as soon as we came to the edge of the stream, he took up some water and sprinkled it over me and over himself. At once we both became ducks, and whether I would or not, I was obliged to go with him up the stream to the mountain. When we arrived at the cottages I was allowed to resume my own form, and there I dwelt until you found me this day and broke the spell.”

They went rejoicing on down the mountain, and presently were at their own home, where they lived happily ever after.

THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS SONG

THERE was once an old gray Pussy who, on a sunny Christmas morning, went down by the waterside to look about. Pretty soon along came a little Robin Redbreast. "Where are you going, little Robin?" says Pussy.

"I'm going to the king to sing him a song this bright Christmas morning," the little Robin replied.

"Come here, little Robin," said Pussy, "and I'll let you see some bonny white fur that grows like a ring round my neck."

But the little Robin said, "No, no, gray Pussy! No, no! You worried the wee Mousie yesterday, and you shall not have the chance to serve me as you did him."

So the little Robin flew away, and he kept flying till he came to a stone wall on the borders of a wood. There he saw a greedy Hawk sitting. The greedy Hawk said, "Where are you going, little Robin?"

"I'm going to the king to sing him a song this bright Christmas morning," the little Robin replied.

"Come here, little Robin," the greedy Hawk said, "and I'll let you see a pretty speckled feather in my wing."

But the little Robin said, "No, no, greedy Hawk! No, no! You pecked the sparrow yesterday, and I shall take care not to get near enough for you to peck me."

So the little Robin flew away, and he kept flying till he came to a great rock beside which he saw a sly Fox lying on the ground. The sly Fox said, "Where are you going, little Robin?"

"I'm going to the king to sing him a song this bright Christmas morning," the little Robin replied.

"Come here, little Robin," the sly Fox said, "and I'll let you see a pretty spot at the tip of my tail."

But the little Robin said, "No, no, sly Fox! No, no! You bit the wee Lamb yesterday, and I shall not go where you can get me between those sharp teeth of yours."

So the little Robin flew away, and he kept flying till he came to a rivulet, and on its banks he saw a small Boy sitting. The small Boy said, "Where are you going, little Robin?"

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"I'm going to the king to sing him a song this bright Christmas morning," the little Robin replied.



"Come here, little Robin," the small Boy said, "and I'll give you some crumbs I have in my pocket."

But the little Robin said, "No, no, small Boy ! No, no ! You caught the Goldfinch yesterday, and I shall keep beyond your reach."

So the little Robin flew away, and he went on and on till he came to the king's palace. Then he sat on a windowsill and sang the king a beautiful song. The people in the palace listened while the Robin sang, and when he finished, the king said to the queen, "What shall we give to the little Robin for singing us this beautiful song?"

The queen replied, "He will not care for money, but we can give him some nice things to eat."

So they filled a plate from the royal table with all the things for which they thought the little Robin might care, and set it out on the windowsill. The little Robin ate, and after that he sang his Christmas song again and flew away to his home.

THE BAKER'S DAUGHTER

A VERY long time ago there was a baker who was so greedy and mean that he would do almost anything to increase his hoard of money. He never failed to cheat his customers whenever he had a chance, and the person who could get the better of him had to be very clever indeed.

He had a daughter who helped him in his bake-shop, and she saw how he treated people and how he succeeded in accumulating money by his bad practices. She too loved money, and in time she fell into her father's ways of getting it.

One day when the baker was away and his daughter was alone in the shop an old woman came in. "My pretty girl," said she, "I pray you to give me a bit of bread, for I am old and hungry."

The girl at first told her to be off, but as the old woman was reluctant to go, and continued to beg for a bit of bread, the baker's daughter finally took up a piece of dough, and handing it to the old

woman said, "There now, go along and do not trouble me any more."

"My dear," says the woman, "you have given me a piece of dough, but I have no place to bake it. Will you not bake it for me in your oven?"

"Very well," replied the girl, and taking the dough she placed it in the oven, while the old woman sat down to wait till it was baked.

When the girl thought the baking was finished she looked in the oven, but instead of the small cake she expected to find there she was very much amazed to see a large loaf of bread. "I'm not going to give a big loaf like that to the old woman," thought she, and she pretended to look about the oven as if in search of something.

Then she took out the loaf and set it on a shelf to sell. Turning to the old woman she said, "I cannot find the cake I was baking for you. It must have tumbled into the fire and burned up."

"Well then," said the old woman, "give me another piece of dough, and I will wait until it is baked."

So the girl took another piece of dough, smaller than the first piece, put it in the oven, and shut the door. After a while she looked in to see if it was baked, and found a loaf of bread still larger than the



one she had taken out before. "Dear me!" she exclaimed, pretending to search the oven, "I have surely lost the dough again. There's no small cake here."

"That is a pity," said the old woman, "but never mind. I will wait while you bake me another piece."

The girl then took a bit of dough no larger than her little finger and put it in the oven, and the old

woman sat patiently waiting. When the girl thought the dough ought to be baked she looked into the oven and there saw a loaf, bigger than either of the others had been.

"That is mine," said the old woman.

"No," retorted the girl; "how could such a large loaf have grown out of your little piece of dough?"

"It was my dough you put in the oven," the old woman responded, "and except for that the oven was empty. So the loaf is mine."

"It is not," declared the girl, "and you shall not have it."

When the old woman saw that the girl was going to keep the loaf, she took her cane out from under her cloak and touched the girl with it. "You have been trying to cheat me all along," said she. "I know your tricks and how sharp you are in your dealings with those who trade here. You do not deserve to live among human beings any longer. I command you to take the form of an owl."

Immediately the baker's daughter became an owl, and after fluttering about the shop seeking for a way to escape, the owl flew out at an open window and the girl was never seen again.

THE WIZARD AND THE BEGGAR

ONCE upon a time there was a poor man who went from house to house begging, and he was always ragged and hungry. As he walked along the road one day he said to himself, "When I ask for food people give me only scraps and fragments. I never get a square meal. Now if someone would give me enough so that I could eat until I was satisfied I would remember the generosity of that person as long as I live.

He repeated this declaration several times as he walked slowly along, and while he was speaking he met a dog. "What is that you say, my friend?" the dog asked.

"I said that if anyone would give me all I wanted to eat I would never forget the grace and merit of that person," replied the beggar.

"People are very apt to be careless and ungrateful," said the dog, "and they forget what is done for them."

"I would not forget," vowed the beggar.

"Ah, well," sighed the dog, "you may be right as to yourself, but certain it is that most men do not remember favors. When I was young and strong I guarded my master's house and grounds. Now that I am old he has turned me out to shift for myself. He gives me no food and will not permit me to enter his gate, and if he catches me near where he lives he curses and beats me. Yes, he has forgotten all my services."

"It would not be so with me," declared the beggar, and he walked on mumbling as before that he would remember all his days with gratitude whoever gave him plenty to eat.

He had not gone far when he passed a poor old donkey that was browsing by the roadside. "Stop a moment, my friend," the donkey called after him, "and tell me what you are saying."

The beggar repeated what he had told the dog.

"You may be different from other people," said the donkey, "but men are very apt to be ungrateful. When I was young and strong I ploughed the fields for my master and drew his cart, and he fed and cared for me. Now that I cannot work I am driven out to die."



The beggar talks with the wizard

The beggar went on till he came to a cave which was the home of a wizard. The wizard sat at the entrance to the cave, and he heard the beggar muttering to himself as he approached.

"What were you saying as you walked along?" asked the wizard when the beggar stopped and greeted him.

"Oh," replied the beggar, "I said that my gratitude to the man who would give me enough to eat would last as long as I live."

"Are you sure that you would always remember benefits?" questioned the wizard.

"A benefit received by me would never be forgotten," declared the beggar.

"Well," said the wizard, "I have two jewels. One, if held in a person's mouth enables him to fly like a bird. The other, if held in a person's mouth, gives him all the money for which he may wish. This second jewel I now present to you."

The wizard handed the jewel to the beggar, who said, "Your grace and merit will ever be remembered by me. I thank you more than tongue can tell. I shall always wish you health and happiness and pray for blessings on your head."

Having thus spoken, the beggar went his way, and through the magic jewel he had every wish for wealth gratified.

"How do you secure your desires?" a neighbor one day asked him.

"No wonder you think my prosperity very strange," he answered, "for not long ago I was a poor beggar, as you well know. But as I was on my travels a wizard gave me a wishing-jewel, and by simply placing it in my mouth I can get all the money I want. Listen to me," he continued. "The wizard has yet another jewel, which, if placed in the mouth, will enable one to fly like a bird. Come, let us go and kill him. Then the jewel will be ours and we will possess it together."

The neighbor agreed to join in this enterprise, and they set off. The wizard saw them coming, and when they arrived before the door of his cave he came out and said to the former beggar, "It has been a long, long time since I gave you that wishing-jewel. Why have you not visited me?"

"There has been no opportunity when I had the leisure to come so far," the man replied. "I have had much work to do."

The wizard saw by his look and manner that he came with evil intent, and he was not surprised

when the man said, "I am here for that other jewel. Give it to me, you old wizard, or else I shall kill you."

"Well," said the wizard, "let me see the wishing-jewel first."

The greedy fellow took the jewel from his pocket, and holding it in his left hand reached out with the other to grasp the flying-jewel, which he thought the wizard was about to give him. But the wizard had placed the flying-jewel in his mouth, and before his rascally visitor could draw back, he had seized the wishing-jewel, and at once flew away. Thus the man and his neighbor were left without either of the wonderful jewels, and there was nothing for them to do but to take themselves off home empty handed.

THE SPARROW AND THE CROW

A SPARROW and a crow once agreed to have dinner together, and the sparrow brought rice and the crow brought peas. The sparrow was cook, and he took the rice and peas and made a soup. When dinner was ready the crow stood by to claim his share.



But the sparrow exclaimed scornfully, "Whoever heard of anyone sitting down to dinner so dirty as you are? You are black all over. For goodness' gracious sake, go and wash in the pond first."

The crow, though a little huffy at being called dirty, thought best to comply, for he knew what a determined little person the sparrow was. So he went to the pond and said,

"Your name, sir, is Pond,
And my name is Crow.
Please give me some water,
For if you do so
I can wash and be neat,
And the nice soup can eat;
Though I really don't know
What the sparrow can mean.
I'm quite sure, as crows go,
I'm remarkably clean!"

The pond replied, "Certainly, I will give you water; but first you must go to the deer and beg a piece of his horn. With that you can dig a nice little channel for the water to flow into me, clear and fresh, from a spring on the hill close by."

So the crow flew to the deer and said,

"Your name, sir, is Deer,
And my name is Crow.
Give me a piece of your horn, please,
For if you do so

I can dig where a rill
Will flow from the hill.
Then I'll wash myself neat,
And the nice soup can eat;
Though I really don't know
What the sparrow can mean.
I'm sure, as crows go,
I'm remarkably clean !''

The deer replied, " I will let you have a piece of my horn ; but first you must go to the cow and ask her to give you some milk for me to drink."

So the crow flew to the cow and said,

" Your name, ma'am, is Cow,
And my name is Crow.
Oh give me some milk, please,
For if you do so
To the deer I'll be gone
For a piece of his horn.
Then I'll dig where a rill
Will flow from the hill,
And I'll wash myself neat,
That the soup I may eat;
Though I really don't know
What the sparrow can mean.
I'm sure, as crows go,
I'm remarkably clean !''

The cow replied, " Certainly, I will give you milk, only first you must bring me some grass."

So the crow flew to some grass and said,

“Your name, sir, is Grass,
And my name is Crow.
Oh give me some blades, please,
For if you do so
From the cow, sleek as silk,
I will get some rich milk,
And to the deer will be gone
For a piece of his horn.
Then I ’ll dig where a rill
Will flow from the hill,
And I ’ll wash myself neat,
That the soup I may eat;
Though I really don’t know
What the sparrow can mean.
I ’m sure, as crows go,
I ’m remarkably clean!”

The grass replied, “Certainly, I will give you some blades; but you must first go to the blacksmith and get him to make you a sickle with which to cut them off.”

So the crow went to the blacksmith and said,

“Your name, sir, is Smith,
And my name is Crow.
Please make me a sickle,
For if you do so
I no longer need fret,
The grass I can get,
And the cow, sleek as silk,
Will give me some milk,
And to the deer I ’ll be gone
For a piece of his horn.

Then I'll dig where a rill
Will flow from the hill,
And I'll wash myself neat,
That the soup I may eat;
Though I really don't know
What the sparrow can mean.
I'm sure, as crows go,
I'm remarkably clean!"

"I will do what you ask with pleasure," said the blacksmith, "if you will help me make a hot fire by blowing my bellows."

So the crow took hold of the bellows' handle and pumped until the fire burned hot and bright, and then the blacksmith made a sickle. With the sickle the crow went and cut off some grass blades, which he carried to the cow, and the cow gave him some milk. This he took to the deer, and the deer broke off a piece of his horn and gave it to the crow.

Then the crow went to a hill beside the pond and dug a channel from a spring, and when the water flowed into the pond from it, clear and fresh, the crow washed himself.

Finally he flew away to eat dinner, but the sparrow was a naughty bird, and he had not waited for the crow to return, but had eaten the nice soup, and the crow had no dinner at all.

THE TWO BROTHERS

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers whose father left them each a small property; and the elder brother, who was sharp and miserly, grew very rich, but the younger brother became poorer and poorer. This younger brother had many children, and there were times when he could scarcely furnish them with bread to eat. At last the bread too failed, and he was greatly grieved, for nowhere was there a more honest or kinder man than he. "I will go to my rich brother and ask him for a loaf of bread," he said.

But he only wasted his time. The rich brother called him a beggar and a vagabond and slammed the door in his face. After this brutal reception the poor fellow did not know which way to turn. Hungry, scantily clad, shivering with cold, his legs could scarcely carry him along. He had not the heart to go home with nothing for his children. So he went toward the mountain forest. In the woods he found a few wild pears on the ground, and he ate

them, though they were so sour they set his teeth on edge. But what was he to do to warm himself? The wind pierced him through and through with its chill blast. "Where shall I go?" he said. "What will become of my little ones in the cottage? They have neither food nor fire, and my brother has driven me from his door."

Just then he remembered to have heard that the top of the mountain was made of crystal, and that a fire was forever burning there. "I will try to find the fire," said he, "and then I may be able to warm myself."

So he went on climbing higher and higher, till he reached the mountain top, and it was made of crystal, as he had heard. At the very summit was a small sheltered glen, and in this glen he was startled to see twelve strange beings sitting around a huge fire. He was frightened and stopped for a moment, but then said to himself, "What have I to lose? Why should I fear? God be with me! Courage!"

He advanced toward the fire, and bowing respectfully said, "Good people, take pity on my distress. I am very poor. There is no fire in my cottage. Will you let me warm myself at this fire of yours?"

They all looked kindly at him, and one of them said, "Come and sit down with us. You are quite



welcome to share the warmth of our fire as long as you choose to stay.”

He sat down and soon was thoroughly warmed and comfortable. While he lingered enjoying the grateful heat an old man with a long white beard and a bald head rose from the midst of the flames and stepped forth from the fire and spoke to him. “My friend,” said the old man, “I am the King of Time, and thou seest about the fire the twelve months, my

attendants. It is my advice that thou waste not the day here. Return to thy cottage and work and live honestly. Take with thee as many embers from our fire as thou wilt, for we have more than we need."

"The embers would indeed be welcome," responded the man; "but how can I carry them?"

"We will put them in a sack for thee," the old man said, "and thou need not fear that they will burn either the sack or thee."

Then the old man stepped back into the fire and vanished. Immediately the twelve months rose and filled a sack with embers. This sack they put on the man's shoulders and advised him to hasten home.

Humbly thanking them, he set off. He wondered that the embers did not feel hot, and that they seemed so heavy. Presently he had descended from the mountain and come forth from the forest. As he passed his brother's house his brother saw him and was so curious to know what was in the sack that he ran out to the road and said, "You seem to be heavily burdened. I can't imagine what you are carrying."

"It is nothing but a sack of embers which some friends on the mountain gave me from their fire," replied the poor brother.

"Embers! Impossible!" exclaimed the other.
"Let me see them."

The poor brother put down the sack, and they were both equally surprised on looking inside to find it full of gold pieces. "Ah!" said the bearer of the sack, "I now have wealth and shall be able to provide generously for my family."

He was overjoyed, but the older brother was envious, and when he learned how the money had been acquired he said to himself, "I also will visit the mountain, and perhaps I will meet with the same luck."

So he set forth, and on reaching the crystal summit he found the twelve months seated around the fire. He approached them and said, "I beg of you, good people, to let me warm myself, for it is bitterly cold, and I am poor and homeless."

But one of the months replied, "Sir, we know thee. Thou art a rich miser and hast dared to lie to us. Well dost thou deserve punishment."

Amazed and terrified the man stood silent, and then he saw emerging from the flames a white-bearded old man, who addressed him sternly and said, "Woe unto the selfish! Thy brother is good. Therefore have we blessed him. As for thee, thou art wicked and shalt not escape our vengeance."

At these words the twelve arose. One of them seized the unfortunate man, struck him a sharp blow, and passed him along to the next. The second also struck him and passed him to the third, and they all in turn served him in like manner. Then he was given over to the old man, who disappeared with him into the fire.

Weeks and months went by, but the rich man did not come back, and none knew what had become of him ; nor has he returned even to this day.

THE KIDNAPPED PRINCESS

LONG, long ago there lived in Ireland a young man named Guleesh. Near his house was a little hill where the grass grew very green and soft, and people said that the elves lived in this green hill.

One evening after the day's work was done, as Guleesh stood leaning against the wall of his house looking up into the sky and watching the beautiful yellow moon over his head, he said to himself, "I wish I was out of this place altogether. I'd sooner be anywhere else in the world than here. Ah, yellow moon, you can go on and on whither you please, and no man can stop you. I wish I had the same freedom."

Hardly were these words out of his mouth when he heard a great noise coming toward him. The sound was that of many people running, talking, laughing, and making sport, and it soon increased into a wild roar as it rapidly drew nearer. Then it

went by him like a whirl of wind, and he heard it going into the elfin hill.

"Musha!" said he, "the little people are merry enough. I'll follow them."

He found there was now an opening in the hill, and he walked in. What a racket greeted his ears! Every elf was crying out as loud as he could, "My horse and bridle and saddle! My horse and bridle and saddle!"

"Well," said Guleesh, "I'll try that song too," and he called out as loud as any of them, "My horse and bridle and saddle! My horse and bridle and saddle!"

At once a fine horse with a bridle of gold and a saddle of silver stood before him. He leaped up on the horse's back, and the moment he was in the saddle he saw clearly that the hill was full of horses and of little people getting on them and making ready to ride.

"Are you going with us to-night, Guleesh?" asked one of the little people.

"I am, surely," replied Guleesh.

"If you are, come along," said the little man, and out they went all together, riding faster than the fastest horse that ever was owned by any human being.

They overtook the cold autumn wind that was before them and left it far behind, and never stopped or stayed till they came to the sea. Then they paused only for a moment, while every one of them said, "Up to the clouds! Up to the clouds!"

Immediately they rose into the air and sped on with the white-capped waves far below them. Presently they had crossed the sea and there was land again underneath. The same mad race continued, but at last a halt was called and one of the elfin men said to Guleesh, "Do you know where you are now?"

"Not a know," he replied.

"You're in France," said the man. "The daughter of the King of France is to be married tonight, and we are going to do our best to bring her away with us. You must help. We shall put the girl up behind you on your horse. She could not ride behind us. But you are flesh and blood, so that she can take a good grip on you and not fall off. Are you satisfied, Guleesh, and will you do what we're telling you?"

"Why should n't I be satisfied?" responded Guleesh. "Anything that you tell me to do I'll do."

They alighted from their horses then, and one of them said a word Guleesh did not understand, but it had the power to whisk them away into the king's palace. A great feast was going on, and all the noblemen and gentry of the kingdom were there dressed in silk and satin and gold and silver. The place was as bright as the day with lighted lamps and candles, and at first Guleesh had to shut his eyes he was so dazzled by the brilliance. There were a hundred tables set with all the good things to eat and drink that one could desire, and there were musicians at each end of the hall playing the sweetest music that ever a man's ears heard, and there were beautiful young women and handsome youths in the middle of the hall dancing. Such a feast and merry-making had not been known in France for twenty years, and it was in honor of the wedding of the king's only daughter.

Guleesh and his companions stood together at the head of the hall, where there was a fine altar and two bishops waiting to marry the girl; but nobody saw the intruders, for they were invisible.

"Tell me which is the king's daughter," whispered Guleesh, when he was becoming a little accustomed to the music and the lights.

His companions pointed her out, and he saw a woman so lovely he thought there was not on all the earth her equal; but he observed tears in her eyes. "It can't be," said Guleesh, "that she is unhappy when all about her are so full of joy."

"You're wrong there," said one of the elves. "She has no love for the man she is to marry, and it's against her will that she takes him. But indeed," said he, crooking his big mouth, "we will see she has someone else instead."

Guleesh pitied the handsome young lady greatly when he heard that. What a wretched fate to have to marry a man she did not like, or, worse still, to take one of the ugly elves for a husband. However he did not say a word, though he bitterly repented that he had agreed to help the elfin crew who were to snatch her away from her home. "Oh!" thought he, "if I could only find a way to save her I would n't care whether I were alive or dead. But I see nothing that I can do for her."

When the dancing was over, the old king and queen said it was now time for the marriage to take place. So the king took the bridegroom by the hand, and the queen slipped her hand into her daughter's, and the four went toward the altar with the great lords and gentry following. As they drew

near where the two bishops were standing, one of the elves put out his foot in front of the princess, and she stumbled free from her mother's hand. At



the same moment the elf threw on her some powder from a little box he took out of his pocket, and that made her invisible. He then caught her away from her companions up into the air. Instantly the

other elves joined him and they hurried from the hall with their prize, and Guleesh followed.

"My horse and bridle and saddle!" cried each of the elves.

"My horse and bridle and saddle!" said Guleesh, and all the horses were beside them at once.

"Now jump up, Guleesh," said the little men, and



A ride with the elves through the clouds

as soon as he was in the saddle they set the lady behind him.

"We must make haste away," they added. "The morning is not far off."

The horses then broke into a gallop that continued till they came to the sea. "Up to the clouds! Up to the clouds!" cried every rider, and up they flew, high over the sea, and presently landed in Ireland.

Still they hastened on, and at last they arrived at the elfin hill near the home of Guleesh. But just as they were about to enter the hill, Guleesh turned and caught the girl in his arms and leaped off the horse. "I cross you to myself in the name of God!" said he.

No sooner had he said this than the horse fell at his feet, and it was nothing but the beam of a plough which the elves had made into a horse for his use that night. All the other horses dropped too, and some were old brooms, and some were broken sticks, and some nothing but withered cabbage stalks or potato stems.

The elves now began to call out, "Oh Guleesh, you thief, may no good come to you! Why did you play that trick on us?"

They had no power to carry off the girl after Guleesh had consecrated her to himself. "Never

mind!" they shouted. "You'll pay us another time for this. Believe us, you'll repent it."

One of the little men close by Guleesh suddenly slapped the girl on the side of the head. "You'll get no good out of her now," said he. "She'll never talk any more. It's time for us to go, but you'll remember us, Guleesh!"

Then the elves disappeared into the hill. Turning to the young woman, Guleesh said, "Would you not sooner stay with me than with them?"

Her lips moved, but no sound came from them. Guleesh did not believe that the elf had really made her dumb, and he spoke again. "I'm afraid that my cottage yonder is the only shelter I can offer you," said he. "Perhaps you do not trust me, but I never belonged to that company of ugly elves who carried you away with them. I am the son of an honest farmer, and I did not know, when I started on the journey with them, what they intended to do. If I can, I will find a way to send you back to your father."

Her lips moved again, but she was not able to speak. She raised her hand and laid her finger on her mouth, and he knew then that the elf had made her dumb. He stood thinking what he ought to do. He did not like to take her to his cottage, for he

knew well that no one would believe him when he said he had been to France and brought back with him the daughter of the French king. There were those among the neighbors who might mock and insult her. Suddenly a new thought occurred to him. "I know what I'll do," said he. "I'll take her to the priest's house, and he'll keep her and care for her."

He turned to the lady again, and told her his plan, and explained that the priest was an excellent man, and very friendly to himself, and would give her the best of care if she wished to remain in his home.

She bowed her head to show that the proposal was agreeable to her, and they went together to the priest's dwelling. The sun was just rising when they arrived at the door. Guleesh knocked, and the priest came to see who was there so early. As soon as he set eyes on them he concluded they sought him in order to be married.

"Guleesh!" said he, reprovingly, "why do you come for me to marry you at such an hour? Can you not wait till ten o'clock? But who is it you have here?" he asked as he looked again at the girl. "Who is she? Where does she come from?"

"I'll tell you that later," said Guleesh, "but I want you to understand that it's not seeking for

marriage that brings me to you. I come to ask you to give a lodging in your house to this young lady."

The priest gazed at him in amazement, but without any more questions desired that they should come in. He shut the door behind them and led the way to the parlor. "Now, Guleesh," said he, "tell me who is this young lady."

"I carried her off from the palace of the King of France," said Guleesh, "and she is the king's daughter."

He began his story then and told the whole to the priest, who was so much surprised that he could not help exclaiming at times and raising his hands with wonder. The priest said that she might stay in his house and he would do what he could about finding a way to send her back. They agreed to call her name Mary.

From that time on not a day passed but that Guleesh went to the priest's house to have a talk with him about the young lady, and to see if she had recovered the power to speak. But alas! she remained voiceless, though she learned a means of carrying on a sort of conversation by movements of her hands, by laughing and smiling, and other signs. It was not long before she and Guleesh understood each other very well. Neither he nor

the priest knew how to get her back to her own country. However, the priest wrote several letters to the French king, which he sent by peddlers who travelled to foreign parts ; yet these letters all went astray and never a one came to the king's hand.

Many months passed, and Guleesh fell deeper and deeper in love with the princess every day, and it was plain to both him and the priest that she liked him. He indeed began to fear greatly at last lest the king should really hear where his daughter was and take her back, and he besought the priest to write no more.

One autumn evening, as Guleesh was lying on the grass near his home thinking over everything that had happened from the time he started on that wild journey with the elves, he suddenly remembered it was exactly a year since he made the acquaintance of the little people. "This is the last day of the last month of autumn," said he, "and so was that. I will go and stand where I stood then and find out whether the elves will come again. Perhaps I may see or hear something that will be useful to me and to Mary."

So, as the night darkened, he stood leaning against the wall of his house watching the elfin hill. The moon rose and the white fog gathered in the hollows

of the grass fields. Not a breath of wind was stirring and there was no sound to be heard save the chirruping of the insects and the distant cries of the wild geese far overhead passing from lake to lake.

He stood for an hour, two hours, three hours, and he was beginning to think that the elves would not come that night and that he might as well go into the house when he heard a sound approaching. At first it was like the beating of waves on a rocky shore, then like the roar of a great waterfall, then like a loud storm in the tops of the trees, and then the whirlwind burst into the elfin hill. The rush was so swift that Guleesh lost his breath with it, but he recovered himself and ran into the hill after the elves, who were making ready for some new expedition. Each one of them was crying, "My horse and bridle and saddle! My horse and bridle and saddle!"

But all at once there was quiet. They had seen Guleesh. "Hello, Guleesh, my boy!" said one of them. "Are you here with us again? How are you getting on with the princess? You shall have no horse to-night. I'll go bail you'll not play such a trick on us this year as you did last."

"No, that you won't," said another elf. "But you did it very cleverly."

"He's an odd chap, though," remarked another, "to have a fancy for a woman who can't speak a word to him."

"Perhaps he likes to be looking at her," said still another.

"Ha, ha!" laughed another, "and if the galoot only knew it, there's an herb that would cure her growing in his own dooryard. He only needs to put it in water and boil it and give her a drink of the water he boils it in to make her well."

"Ah, we will not bother our heads about him and his lady!" cried another. "Let's be off."

So they jumped on their horses, and away they went out of the elfin hill. They disappeared, and Guleesh found himself sitting on the ground outside the hill looking after them and wondering.

Now he went in the house to bed, but he could not sleep a wink for thinking of what he had heard, and he was up at daybreak. "I don't know what the little people meant by their talk," said he, "but I'll search and see if there's any plant growing about the house except docks and thistles and such as have always grown there."

So he searched through the grass in the dooryard and presently observed a large herb he had never seen before. Seven branches came out of the stalk,

and seven leaves grew on each branch, and when he bruised a leaf a white sap oozed out. "It's very queer," he said, "that I never noticed this herb before. If there's virtue in any herb at all there ought to be in such a strange one as this."

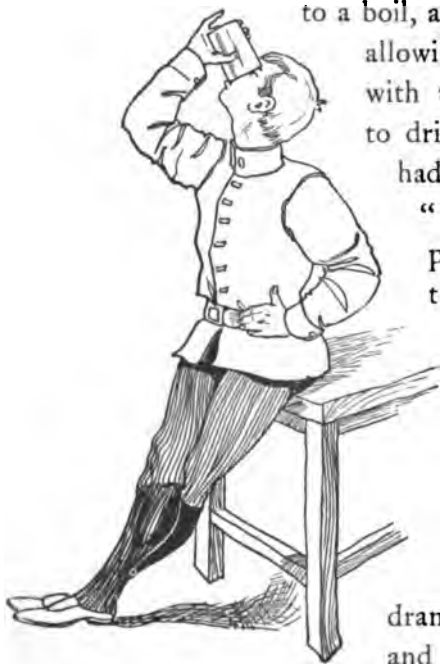
He drew out his knife, cut the plant, and carried it into the house. Then he stripped the leaves off, cut up the stalk, and put the whole in a pot of water. This he set on the fire, brought the water

to a boil, and after taking it off and allowing it to cool, filled a cup with the juice and determined to drink and see what effect it had. "Perhaps," thought he,

"it is poison, and the little people only want me to kill the princess with it. But no harm shall come to her.

I will gladly risk my life to discover whether it is poison or not."

He tasted and found the liquor sweet and agreeable. Growing bolder, he drank all there was in the cup, and immediately became so



drowsy he lay down and fell asleep. He did not wake till night and then was exceedingly hungry and thirsty. After he had refreshed himself he again slept, but the next morning he was up early, filled another cup with the drink, and went to the priest's house, carrying it in his hand. Never before had he felt so light and strong, so bold and valiant, and he knew very well that this was the effect of what he had drank.

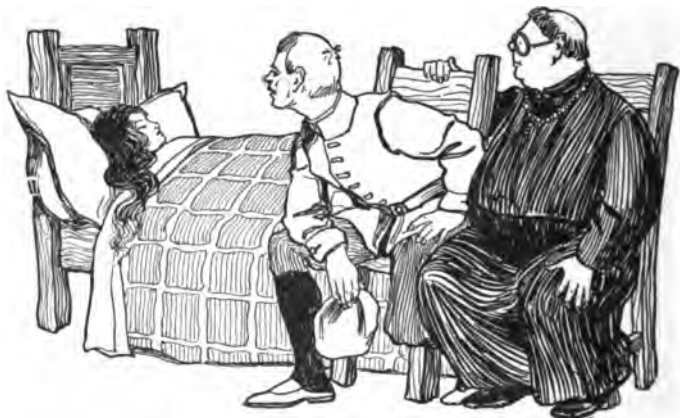
He found the priest and the princess wondering greatly why he had not visited them the previous day. When they had heard the news he had to tell he handed the lady the cup and she drank. She could not keep awake then and lay down on her bed. A heavy sleep came on her, and she never woke till the next day. Guleesh and the priest sat beside her the entire time anxiously waiting the outcome. About noon she opened her eyes and looked around as if she did not know where she was.

"Have you slept well, Mary?" the priest asked.

"Very well indeed, thank you," she replied.

When Guleesh heard her speak he gave a cry of joy and ran to clasp her hand, and he said, "Lady of my heart, that is the sweetest sound I have heard in all my life."

Then she told him how obliged she was for all the kindness he had shown her since she came to



Ireland, and said that he might be certain she would never forget it.

They brought her food and she ate, and they were all very merry. Their joy continued day after day, and the friendship between Guléesh and the princess constantly increased. So at last they were married, and they lived together happily the rest of their lives.

THE GRATEFUL BEASTS

A CERTAIN man having lost nearly all his money resolved to set off with the little that was left and travel into the wide world. So he took his staff in his hand and started. At length he came to a village where he found the boys and girls on the street making such a noise running and shouting that he stopped and asked them what was the matter.

"See here," said they ; "we have a mouse that we make scamper around to amuse us. Do look at him ! What a droll sight ! How he jumps about !"

But the man pitied the little thing and said, "Let the mouse go and I will give you some money."

So he gave them some money and the children let the mouse go. Immediately the mouse ran to a hole that happened to be close by and disappeared.

Then the man travelled on until he came to another village. There the children had a donkey which they were making tumble and cut capers.

They laughed and shouted and would not allow the poor beast a moment's rest. So the good man gave them some of his money to let the donkey go, and the donkey trotted off to feed in peace on the common.

At the next village to which the man came the young people had a tame bear and were making him stand on his hind legs to dance for them. They were plaguing the bear sadly, and the man gave them some money to let the beast alone. The bear was very glad to get down on all four feet again, and as he walked off he seemed quite happy.

But now the man had given away all the money he had in the world. Not a single shilling was left in his pocket. He was tired and hungry, and he went to an inn to beg food and shelter; but the landlord had him arrested as a vagabond, and he was put into prison.

That night as he lay in his cell he heard a sound of nibbling and biting just outside at the door. The door was not locked, for the jailor had not been able to find the key, and he had tied the door shut with a rope. Some creature was gnawing at this rope, and presently the rope was severed. Immediately the door swung open and in ran a little mouse.

"Come with me," said the mouse, "and I will show you the way out of the prison. I am the mouse whom you befriended and delivered from those rude village children. You remember you were also good to a donkey and a bear. They are waiting for us outside."

Then the man was glad. He got up and followed the little creature, and they soon joined the donkey and the bear. The prison was on a small island in a river, and the donkey and his comrades had a boat ready to enable the man to escape to the mainland. They all hastened to the shore, and while they were preparing to embark a wave threw up on the sand a beautiful white stone the size and shape of an egg. They saw it plainly, for a bright full moon was shining overhead.

"How lucky!" said the bear, as he picked up the stone and handed it to the man. "This is the wonder stone, and whoever possesses it can have anything for which he wishes."

So the man wished for a palace and a garden and a stable full of horses, and that these should be on the mainland away from the island and its prison. Then he had only to wish himself there, and in a twinkling he was whisked off across the water and into a beautiful palace, and when he went outside

the next morning he found a splendid garden and a stable full of handsome horses. Everything was so fine he felt he could never tire of his new home.

A few days later two merchants came that way, each riding on a horse, and they had their saddlebags full of costly goods. "See," said they, "what a princely palace! The last time we were in this vicinity there was nothing here but a lonely waste."

They were very eager to know what had happened to bring about such a marvellous change, and they went in and asked the master of the palace how he had raised the magnificent structure so quickly.

"It was not I who built this palace," said he. "I have a wonder stone which furnishes me whatever I wish for, and the palace is the stone's work, not mine."

"Never before in our lives have we heard of anything so strange," they said.

Then he brought the stone and showed it to them. They asked him if he would sell it, and offered all their goods for it.

"Let me see your goods," said the man, and when he had looked at them they seemed so rare and beautiful he quite forgot that the stone would bring

him in an instant a thousand better and richer things, and he agreed to make the bargain.

Scarcely was the stone out of his hands, however, when all his wealth was lost to him and he found



himself standing on the island where the prison was, in the exact spot he had stood when he wished for his palace. He had no way to get off the island and he was soon discovered and again locked up.

In a short time the mouse, the donkey, and the bear heard of his misfortune, and one night they came to the prison to help him ; but this time the door of his cell was locked fast, so that the mouse could not release him by simply gnawing off a rope.

The three comrades consulted together, and the bear said, "We must go and get the wonder stone, or all we can do will be useless."

The merchants, meanwhile, had taken up their abode in the palace, and thither the three friends wended their way. It was a two days' journey, but they arrived at last late one evening, and the bear said, "Mouse, go in and search and find out where the stone is kept. You are small and nobody will see you."

Luckily one of the doors was not fastened, and it was no trouble for the mouse to get in and do as he had been told. He soon came back, saying, "Bad news!"

"Couldn't you find the stone?" asked the donkey.

"Yes," replied the mouse. "It hangs under the looking-glass in the great hall, suspended by a red silk thread; but two great cats with fiery eyes are prowling about there."

"Well," said the bear, after thinking a moment, "I have a plan for getting those cats out of the way. Go in again, and see if the masters of the palace are in bed asleep. If they are, nip their noses and pull their hair; then they will be angry because the cats do not keep the mice away from

them and they will, I hope, drive the cats out of the palace."

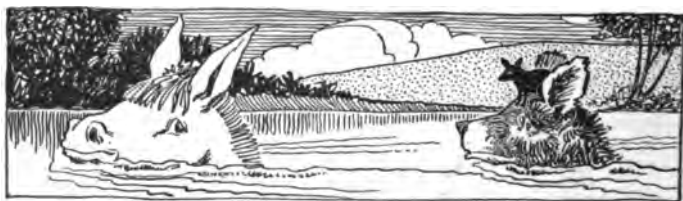
Back went the mouse, and he found the merchants asleep, and he nipped their noses and pulled their hair, and then scudded into hiding under one of the beds. The merchants jumped up, crying, "Those rascally cats are good for nothing at all. They let the mice eat our very noses and pull the hair off our heads!"

So the merchants drove the cats out of the palace, and the mouse had the best of the game. He waited until all was quiet again and then crept forth from his hiding-place and through the great hall to the mirror, where he began to nibble at the red silk string on which the stone was hung. Soon the stone dropped to the floor and the mouse rolled it along to the door. This was hard work and tired him very much, and when he arrived at the door he found he could not get the stone over the threshold. He called to the donkey and bear waiting outside and asked for help. Then the donkey put in his foot and gave the stone a poke and out it came.

They picked it up and at once the palace vanished and the two merchants found themselves on the road with their horses and goods just as they had been when they first saw the palace. There was

nought but barren moorland about them, and they rode away wondering what had happened and asking each other if their residence in the palace had all been a dream. It was night time, so they did not observe the bear, the donkey, and the mouse hastening off on their way to the good man in prison.

When the three friends got to the river they could find no boat and were obliged to swim. The



distance was rather too much for such a little fellow as the mouse, and he rode on the bear's head.

They had not gone far when the bear began to brag and boast, saying, "We are brave fellows, are we not, donkey? What do you think?"

But the donkey replied not a word; for he was carrying the wonder stone in his mouth.

"Why don't you answer me?" demanded the bear. "You are an ill-mannered brute not to speak when you are spoken to."

On hearing that the donkey could restrain himself no longer, and he opened his mouth to respond and

dropped the wonder stone. "I could not speak with the stone in my mouth," said he. "Now it is lost, and you are to blame."

"I did wrong," acknowledged the bear; "but say no more about what is past and cannot be helped. Let us think what is to be done."

They talked matters over as they swam along, and by the time they reached the shore they had decided to call all the frogs together and ask them to bring from the water every stone they could find at the bottom of the river. The frogs were called and the request was made. In conclusion the bear said, "You need not try to bring any stone larger than one frog can carry alone, and as fast as you bring them to shore we will use them in building a fort to protect you from your enemies."

"We would like a fort very much," replied the frogs, "and we will do as you say."

So they set to work to bring all the stones from the river bottom, and the donkey and the bear piled them up into a fort, and the mouse helped, though it was not much he could do. The walls grew higher and higher, and were nearly finished when there came a large fat frog pulling along the wonder stone by the silken string. At once the three friends stopped work and jumped for

joy, shouting, "Now we have found what we wanted."

The mouse took care of the wonder stone while the other two finished the frogs' fort, and that night they went with the stone to the prison. They knew in which cell the good man was locked, and the donkey by standing on his hind legs could look in at the cell window. "Come, mouse," said he, "I will help you up so you can run in through the grating and wake the man, and then I will give him the wonder stone."

So the mouse clung to one of the donkey's front feet, and the donkey lifted him up to the window sill. He was soon inside and awaked the man. "We have come to help you out of this place again," the mouse said, "and the donkey is at the window with the wonder stone."

The man lost no time in getting the stone into his hand, and then he wished himself and his three rescuers safe and sound in his palace. His wish was granted instantly, and he found the palace, the garden, and the stable with the horses as fine as ever; and he and the three grateful beasts lived happily together in the beautiful palace the rest of their days.

THE FLYING TRUNK

THERE was once a merchant so rich that he might have paved the whole street where he lived, and an alley besides, with pieces of silver, but he did nothing of the sort, for he knew how to make better use of his money. Whenever he laid out a shilling he gained another shilling in return. That is the sort of a merchant he was ; but at last he died.

All his money went to his son, and this son led a very merry life, going every night to masquerades, making banknotes into paper kites, and playing at ducks and drakes on the surface of the lake near his home with gold pieces instead of stones. By such means his money soon vanished, and at last he had only a few pennies left, and his wardrobe was reduced to a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown. His friends did not care for his company any longer, and one of them sent him a stout wooden trunk, rather the worse for wear, with this advice : " Pack up and be off. All you need to do is to get into

the trunk and press the lock and it will carry you wherever you wish to go ; for it is a magic trunk and can fly."

The merchant's son had nothing to pack up, so he was quite free to start at once. He stood beside the trunk in his room thinking a few moments. Then he sat down in the trunk, pressed the lock, and wished to be conveyed to Turkey. In a twinkling up went the trunk through the chimney and carried the merchant's son into the clouds, on and on, higher and higher. When he stirred, the bottom creaked, and he was in great terror ; for if the trunk should break he would have a terrible tumble.

However, the trunk did not break, and in the course of time it descended safely among the tall trees of a forest, and he found himself in the country of the Turks. He carefully hid the trunk under some dry leaves and went straightway out of the forest to a town not far distant.

Just outside the town gates he passed a handsome palace with big windows high up from the ground, but having below only solid walls and no openings whatever. He could not help wondering why it was built in such a curious fashion, and presently he spoke about it to a nurse he met carrying a little child in her arms. "Hark ye," quoth he,

"what palace is that I saw as I entered the town?"

"The king's daughter dwells there," replied the nurse. "It has been prophesied that she would be very unhappy about a lover, and therefore the king built that palace, which no one can get into except by a secret passage underground, and whoever visits the palace of the princess must first obtain permission of the king and queen. More than that, they never allow anyone to see the princess unless they are with her."

"Thank you," said the merchant's son, and he immediately went back into the wood, sat down in his trunk, and had it fly up to the roof of the palace.

There he got out of the trunk and crept through a window into the apartment of the princess. She was lying asleep on a sofa, and she was so beautiful the merchant's son could not help kneeling down to kiss her hand. That awoke her, and she was not a little frightened at the sight of this unexpected visitor; but he told her that he was the Turkish prophet and that he had come down from the sky on purpose to visit her.

On hearing this she was well pleased. So they sat side by side, and he talked to her about her beautiful eyes, and her snowy brow, and said many

other things that she found very sweet to hear. At last he asked the princess if she would marry him, and without delay she answered, "Yes."

When he was about to go she said, "You must come again on Saturday. The king and queen have promised to drink tea with me that evening, and they will be so proud when they hear that I am to marry the Turkish prophet! But be prepared to tell them a nice story. They are extremely fond of stories. My mother likes them to be very moral and aristocratic, and my father likes merry ones which will make him laugh."

So they parted; but before he went the princess gave her lover a handsome sword, the sheath of which was adorned with gold coins; and gold coins were particularly useful to him. He returned in his trunk to the forest and then went into the town and bought a new dressing-gown. Then he hastened back to the woods and sat down to compose a story for Saturday.

At last the story was ready, and at last Saturday came. The king and queen and the whole court were gathered to meet him at the palace of the princess, and he was received with much ceremony.

After tea the queen said, "Will you not tell us a

story? And I pray let it be very profound and instructive."

"But let it make us laugh, too," said the king.



"Most certainly," the stranger replied, and this is the story he told.

Once there was a box of matches on a kitchen mantelpiece next to an old iron saucepan, and the matches and the saucepan were telling each other

the most remarkable events of their youth. The matches scarcely knew what to do with themselves, they were so proud of their high descent. The head of their family had been a mighty pine tree, of which they were small fragments. This parent tree had been the tallest tree of all those in the northern forest where it grew.

"When we were a part of the great green tree," said the matches, "we every morning and evening drank diamond tea — that is dew; and the whole day long we had sunshine — at least when the sun shone; and all the little birds used to sing to us. It might easily be seen, too, that we were rich, for the other trees were clothed with leaves only during the summer, whereas our family could afford to be handsomely clothed the year through.

"But at last the wood-cutters came and put an end to our pleasant life in the forest. The head of our family was appointed to be the mainmast on a magnificent ship which could sail around the world if it wished. The boughs were transported to various places and were put to various uses, and it is our vocation to kindle lights. That is how such grand people as we are have come down to a kitchen."

"Well, it has been different with me," said the iron saucepan. "From the very beginning of my

life much cooking has gone on inside of me, and after every task of cooking I have been well scrubbed and scoured—oh, how many times! My only recreation is to stand clean and bright on this mantelpiece and hold some conversation with my companions.

“We lead a very secluded life here, except for the pail and the market-basket; and as the pail gets no farther than the yard, we depend for news mostly on the market-basket. What dreadful things he does tell of sometimes! Why, I assure you, not long ago an old jar was standing on this very shelf and was so shocked by the things the market-basket told that he fell down and broke into a thousand pieces.”



"You talk too much," interrupted the fire-tongs.
"Let someone else have a chance."

"It is my turn," said the earthenware pitcher.
"I want you all to know that I spent my youth in a very quiet and respectable family. The floors were washed every morning, and clean curtains were hung up regularly every fortnight."

"How very interesting," said the broom. "What a charming way you have of describing things! Anyone could guess at once that a lady was talking, there is something so neat and tidy in it all."

The pitcher went on with her tale, and the end proved as good as the beginning.

Now the teapot was asked to sing, but she had a cold and declared she could only sing when she was boiling.

On the window ledge lay an old quill pen, who said, "If the teapot does not choose to sing she is welcome not to. She sings through her nose anyhow. But there is a nightingale in his cage hung just outside. He can sing."

"I think it highly improper that we should listen to a foreign singer," observed the teakettle, who was a relative of the teapot.

"Oh, well," said the matches, "let us talk about who is the grandest."

"No, I don't like to talk about myself," the saucepan objected. "I tell you, let us all join in making a grand commotion."

"Yes, yes," cried the others. "That would be something worth the doing."

Just then the door opened and the servant-maid came in. The pots and dishes and the rest all stood perfectly still and never made a sound; but they were thinking of the things they might do if they chose.

The maid took down the match-box, opened it, and lit the fire with one of the matches. She waited for the flames to get a good start, and then was replacing the box on the shelf when it by some mischance slipped and all the matches spilled out into the fire. Oh, how they spluttered and blazed up!

"Now," they thought, "every blockhead among our kitchen comrades can see that we are of the highest rank. What a splendid, dazzling light we give! How glorious!"

Then all was over, for they were burned up.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the king, when the stranger finished speaking. "I have not heard anything so entertaining in a long time. Ha, ha, ha!"

"That was a capital story," said the queen. "I quite felt myself transported into the kitchen. You shall certainly marry our daughter."

“Indeed you shall,” said the king, “and I appoint the wedding for Monday. So now, my friend, you may consider yourself one of the family.”

The tidings went forth, and on the evening preceding the time set for the wedding the whole city was illuminated. Cakes, buns, and sugar-plums



were thrown among the people, and all the little boys in the streets stood on tiptoe shouting, “Hurrah!” and whistling through their fingers. It was famous!

“I suppose I ought to do my part, too,” thought

the merchant's son. So he went and bought sky-rockets, squibs, Roman candles, and all kinds of fireworks, put them into his trunk, and flew up into the air, letting them off as he flew.

What a whizzing and cracking and banging there was! All the Turks jumped up to look. Such a meteor they had never seen before. There could not now be a shadow of a doubt that it was the Turkish prophet who was to marry the princess.

As soon as the merchant's son had come down in his trunk to the forest, he said to himself, "I will go into the town and hear what people say about me, and what sort of a figure I made in the air."

Everyone whom he accosted had beheld the bright vision, and all agreed that it was marvellously beautiful.

"I saw the great prophet himself," declared one. "He had eyes like sparkling stars, and a beard like the foaming sea."

"He flew in robes of fire," said another.

Yes, the merchant's son heard many fine things, and the morrow was to be his wedding day!

He now went back to the wood; but what had become of his trunk? It was burned. A spark from the fireworks had remained in it and set it on

fire. There it lay in ashes. The merchant's son could never fly again, could never again go to the princess who was to have been his bride.

She sat on the roof of her palace the whole day anxiously waiting for him. She is waiting still. But he wanders homeless through the world telling stories.

THE CLEVER SHEPHERD

LONG ago England was divided into several different kingdoms. Among the rest was that of Canterbury, and a certain king of this principality had an only daughter who was both wise and beautiful. When she was about twenty years of age the king said to himself, "It is time to think of getting a husband for my daughter, but one would have to go far to find a princess so fair and clever as she, and I shall insist that she has a husband who properly values her."

So he devised a scheme which he thought would make sure that the man who won her was of the right sort. This scheme was to have each candidate for his daughter's affection sit up one entire night with her, and the first one who did so and neither slept nor slumbered should have the princess the next day in marriage; but every aspirant who failed to keep awake should lose his head. A proclamation was issued setting forth these terms, and many knights came and tried to win the fair

lady. However, all ended by forfeiting their lives.

One day a young shepherd who grazed his flock near the highroad not far from the city of the king said to his master, "Sir, I see many gentlemen ride to the court at Canterbury, but I never see them return."

"Ah," said his master, "I know not how you should, for they attempt to sit up with the king's daughter, according to a decree the king has issued. Any man who can keep awake a whole night with her will become her husband; but as the penalty of failure is death, and as not one succeeds in staying awake, they are all beheaded."

"Would they let such as I marry the princess if I did not sleep?" asked the shepherd.

"Yes," his master answered. "It matters not who the candidate is. Prince or beggar, it is all the same."

"Well then I'll try my fortune," declared the lad. "So now for a husband of the king's daughter or a headless shepherd," and off he trudged to the royal city.

On his way thither he had to cross a stream. A plank served for a bridge and he sat down midway on it and pulled off his shoes and stockings to wash

his feet. While he had his feet in the water a fish came biting his toes, and he caught it and



put it in his pocket. Afterward several other fish came nibbling at his toes, and he caught them likewise.

When he reached the palace he knocked at the gate loudly with his crook, and having told his business he was immediately conducted to the presence of the king. "So you want to be the husband of my daughter, do you?" said the king.

"Yes," replied the shepherd.

"Very well," said the king, "come along with me to the hall where you are to sit up with her. If

you can manage to keep awake this whole night long you shall marry her to-morrow."

"But if I can't?" said the shepherd.

"Then off goes your head," was the king's response. "However, you need not try unless you like."

"Oh, yes!" answered the shepherd. "I am going to try, come what will."

The king led the way to a handsome hall where the princess sat waiting to see the new aspirant for her hand. Everything was ready for him, and he was given a luxurious chair. Then dishes of rich food and fruits and drinks of many kinds were placed before him. The shepherd ate and drank plentifully, and this helped to make him sleepy. He did his best to fight off the drowsiness, but by midnight he began to slumber.

"Oh, shepherd!" cried the princess, "I have caught you napping."

He roused up at hearing her speak, and said, "Sweet lady, I was busy fishing."

"Fishing!" exclaimed the princess in astonishment. "Nay, shepherd, how could you be fishing? There is no water in this hall that you could fish in."

"No matter for that," he responded. "I have been fishing in my pocket, and I have just got a fish."

"Mercy!" said she, "do let me see it!"

Thereupon the shepherd slyly drew a fish out of his pocket, at sight of which the princess was greatly pleased. "That is a very nice little fish," said she; "and what a wonder that you should catch it in your pocket! Dear shepherd, do you think you could catch one more?"

"Mayhap I can," he replied.

So he sat quietly a while with his hand in his pocket. Then he suddenly drew out another fish, which the princess declared was ten times finer than the first. "Why, I never heard of anyone who could do a thing like that," said she. "You can go to sleep now, if you wish, and I will excuse you to my father."

So the shepherd slept soundly till morning, and when the king came to the hall with his headsman as usual, the princess cried out, "Here is no work for you this time."

"How so?" asked the king. "Has the fellow neither slept nor slumbered?"

"I gave him permission to sleep after midnight," she replied. "Before that he sat here with me fishing in his pocket," and she showed her father the two fish he had given her.

"I declare!" exclaimed the king, "he must be

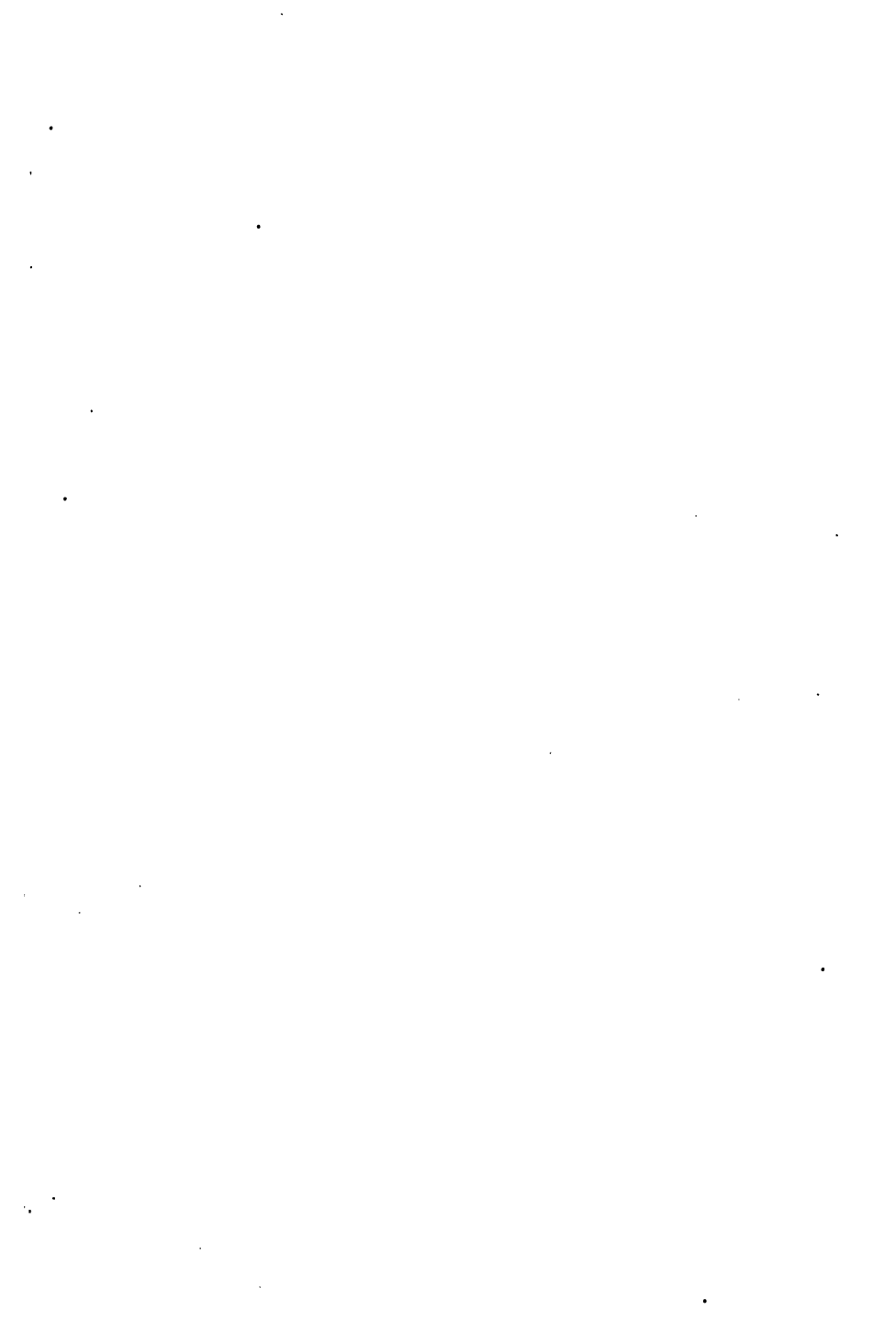
an unusually clever fellow, and it looks as if we had at last found a man worthy of you. But, my friend," said he turning to the shepherd, "I wonder if you could catch a fish in my pocket?"

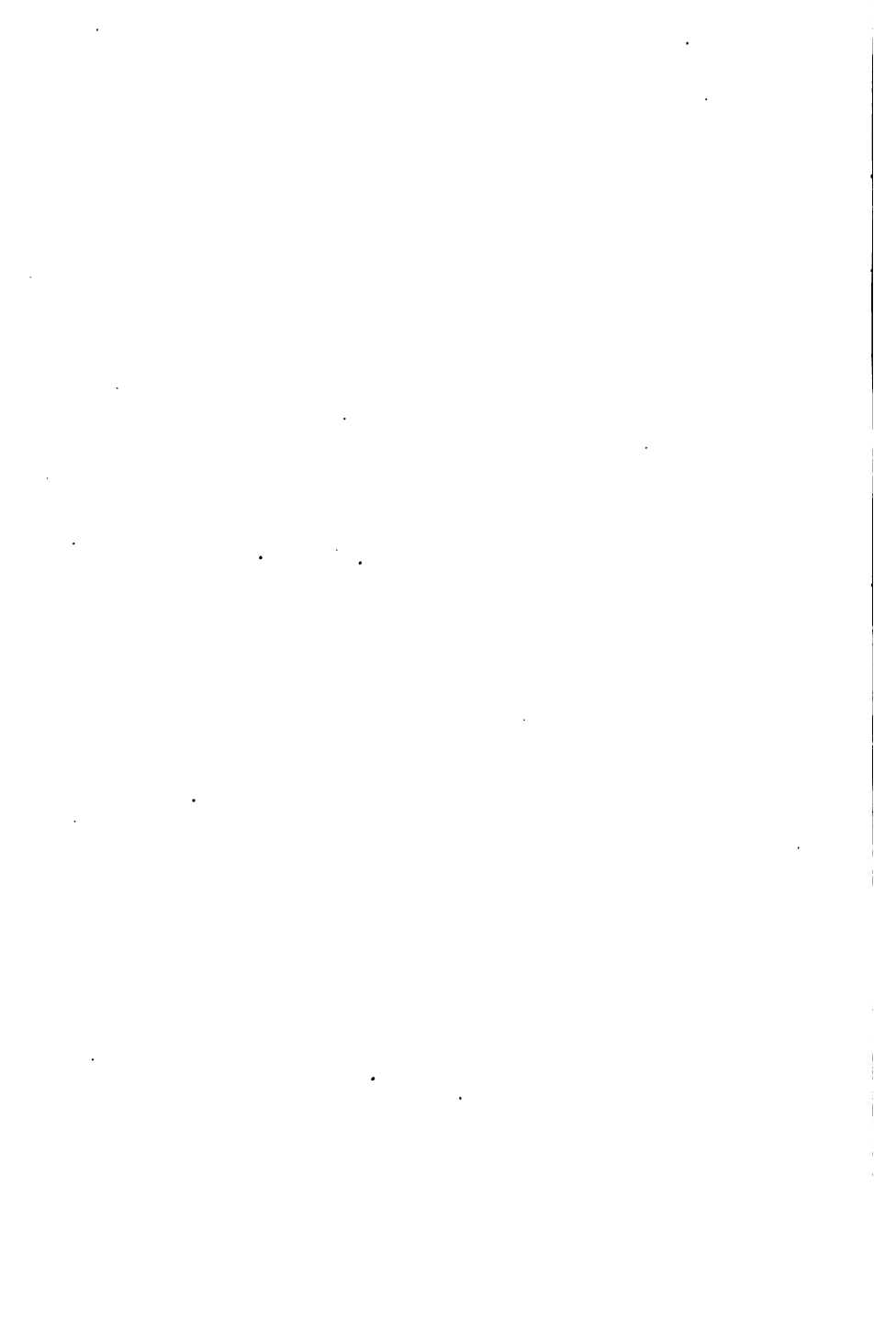
"I will try," the lad answered. "However, you must lie down first."

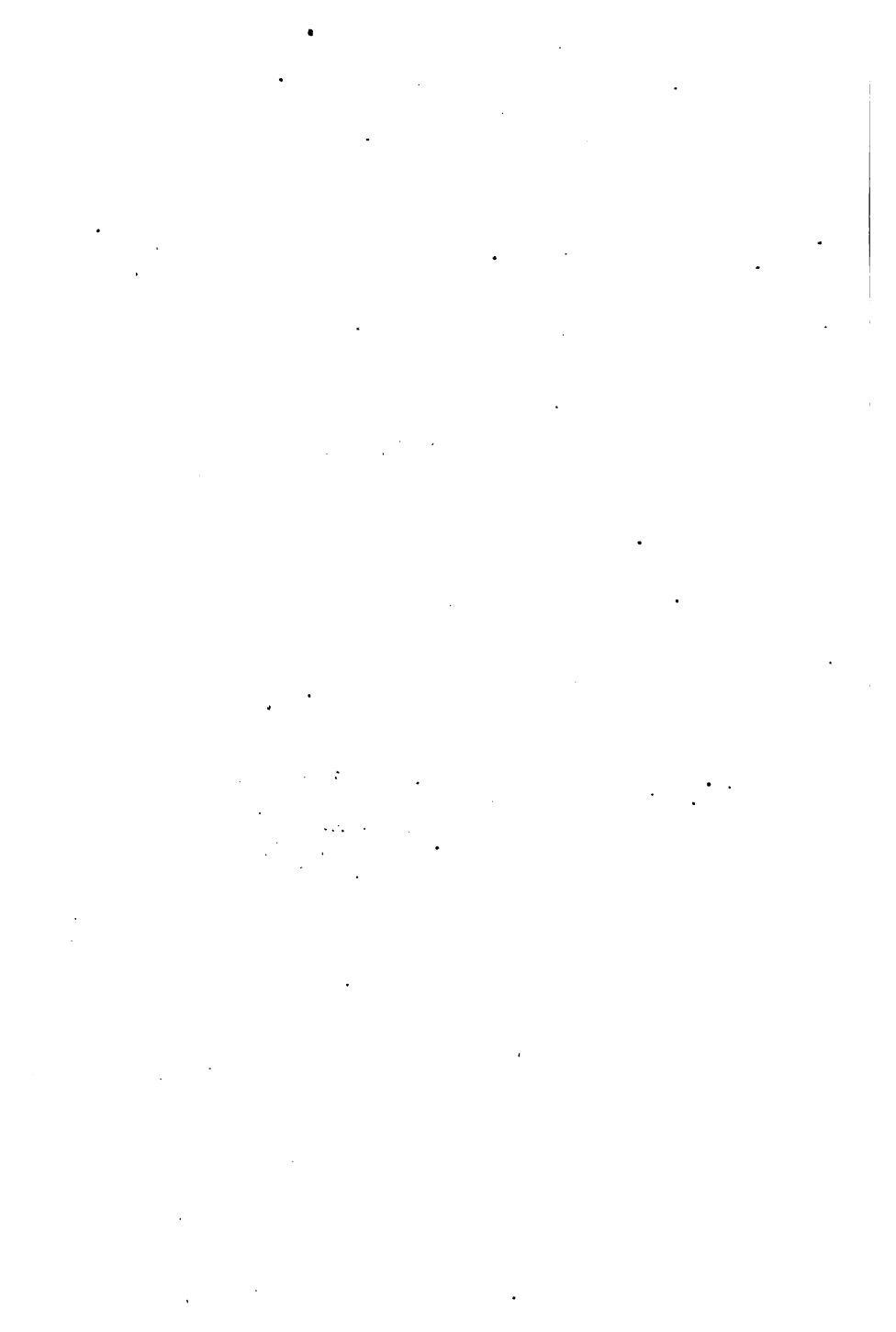
Accordingly the king lay down, and the shepherd concealed a needle in one hand and a fish in the other and began to fumble in the king's coat pocket. Presently he gave the king a prick with the needle and drew out the fish. "Your majesty," said he, "there it is."

The king did not much relish the operation, but he agreed to the marvel of it. "Fish no more," said he, "but take my daughter, according to my royal decree."

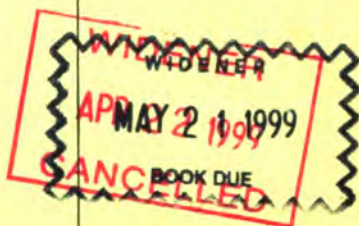
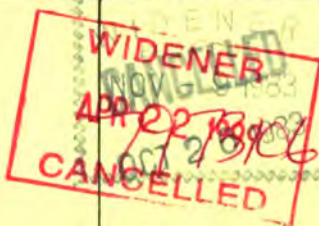
So the wedding was celebrated with great triumph, and thus the poor shepherd became a king's son.







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